



## Update on COVID-19

**Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health**

**November 23, 2020 at 2 p.m.**

**Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.**

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- Thank you, Mayor Tory, and good afternoon. Today I am reporting 331 new cases of COVID-19. There are 167 people in Toronto in hospital with COVID-19 and 41 in ICU.
  - Since I last updated you on Wednesday, we have reported a total of 2,177 cases of COVID-19 in our city.
  - As Toronto is now officially under the restrictions of the Province's lockdown category, today I revoked the orders I issued last week to keep in effect certain closures, on the basis that the force of the Province's authority supersedes mine.
  - As I said in my remarks on Friday, since October 1<sup>st</sup>, we have reported 45% of all cases of COVID-19 recorded during the entire pandemic.
  - Considering such a significant level of spread in a matter of weeks, considering almost 2,200 cases in just the last 5 days – the need for the restrictions enacted by the Province is not in question, even though it comes with the additional cost of hardships for people as a result.
  - Regrettably, the threat of COVID-19 is so widespread that the most difficult choice had to be made.
  - Even so, it is my hope if we work together we can minimize the impact and move on from these restrictions after 28 days.
  - The extent to which we may be able to relies heavily on the choices that we make as individuals during these 28 days.
  - First and foremost, if we're strict about keeping apart, we immediately gain ground against COVID-19's ability to spread.



- So whenever you can in the next 28 days, choose to limit contact. Make that choice for your own protection in the short term and for the benefit of everybody in the long term.
- And do bear in mind that many people can't make that choice, as much as they probably want to, usually because of their jobs.
- And we need those people. We need them at the grocery store and we need them at the pharmacy.
- We need them staffing our schools.
- We need them – more and more – providing care in our hospitals.
- Wherever you see them at work, they're there because that's where we need them to be.
- So we owe it them – those of us who can choose to keep apart more than others – we owe it to them to choose wisely and in ways that limit the risk for those who don't have the choice to keep apart, and who may be at even greater risk of getting sick because of it.
- This is truer for some communities in Toronto than others, often on account of race, or income, or both. Where our data finds risk of infection can be double or more the risk for other residents in the city.
- The ability to keep apart would be made easier for many people during the pandemic with supports that make it possible to do so.
- When people are able to stay home for a while when sick, or stay apart for a time when we're all at risk, the better it is for all of us.
- This is why I agree that supports should be implemented for people who don't have the same choices and alternatives that many of us do.



## Public Health

- It's the simple formula of managing infection spread of the scale we face with COVID-19: the less opportunity people have to interact, the greater the likelihood we'll see less infection.
- At this point I'm still very worried about where we are, where we're going and what happens as we get there.
- I urge you to act with the care and caution that we all showed last spring.
- As I've said many times, with each choice we are able to make, we can lessen the likelihood of worse infection rates and soften the blow of what is yet to come.
- I believe we're closer today to living the kind of life we remember before there was COVID-19.
- But that moment is on the horizon, not just around the corner. And so I ask you to please keep focused while we get there.

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