

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
November 20, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

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- Thank you, Mayor Tory, and good afternoon everyone. As Medical Officer of Health, I can assure you there is no doubt that today's decision by the Province is the necessary decision.
 - It is demanded by the high level of the COVID-19 threat – and demanded by the great risk we will lose control of viral spread.
 - Today, we reported another 420 cases of COVID-19 in Toronto.
 - The total number of cases in Toronto since the pandemic started is now approaching 37,000.
 - Just from October 1st through to today, we have reported 16,630 cases of COVID-19.
 - So 45% of all cases so far have occurred since the beginning of last month.
 - We must act firmly to disrupt COVID-19 and its ability to threaten and harm us.
 - We know we can turn these numbers around.
 - We also know what happens when the virus spreads out of control. We're seeing it now in the United States and in Europe. This is not what I want to see for Toronto.
 - I don't want to see hospitals straining to care for too many people, with limited space to provide that care and limited treatments for the sick.
 - We've already lost more than 1,500 lives to COVID-19. I don't want to see deaths in our city numbering in the higher thousands, having doubled or tripled or worse.

- I don't want to see people struggling with the long haul fallout from COVID-19 – breathlessness, coughing, fatigue, forgetfulness that can linger for weeks, or for months.
- I don't want to see any of this for our city when there are things we can do to prevent it.
- To stay healthy, we have to be able to keep apart, but there are people who struggle to do that for lack of choice.
- They have to go to work.
- They have to pay their bills.
- They've probably not had the kind of job that gave them much chance to put money aside for a rainy day, let alone a drawn out pandemic.
- That is why I am adding my voice to those urging senior levels of government to find ways to support people practically through the next few weeks – in part because it will allow more people to stay safely at home and that will help reduce and prevent the spread of infection, which is why we're doing this to begin with.
- So let's be disciplined about keeping apart in the next 28 days, by limiting contact with the people we don't live with.
- Now for frontline workers – whether in healthcare or in the essential services sector – we know that your work requires you to have contact with people you don't live with– that's why in addition to workplace safety measures, we're calling for enhanced supports to keep you as safe as possible.
- Everyone has different needs and requirements, but going forward for those of us who can choose, please choose wisely.



Public Health

- Please choose to keep at least six feet or two metres apart from people you don't live with.
- Please choose to wear your mask when you're exposed to people you don't live with.
- Please choose to wash your hands as frequently as possible.
- And please choose to stay home and stay apart as much as you can.
- If you resolve to keep out of COVID-19's way you'll deprive it of the chance to keep spreading at these dangerous levels.
- For now that means keeping apart from those we want to be closest to. No excuses, no exceptions, no 'just this one time' – because letting our guards down has undeniably played a part in bringing us to this moment.
- Keeping a distance from one another will prevent the virus from spreading and will move us closer to what we all want: life in good health, life in close contact, life without worry about this virus that has changed our lives.
- So if we've got to do this – and there is no doubt that we do – let's make it work.

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