

**Update on COVID-19**  
**Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health**  
**April 14, 2021 at 2 p.m.**  
**Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.**

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- Thank you Chief Pegg, and good afternoon.
  - Today I am reporting 1,332 cases of COVID-19.
  - There are 90 new hospitalizations to report, bringing the number of people in hospital to 730.
  - 124 of them are in the ICU.
  - As I said on Monday, we are living through one of the worst periods of the pandemic and the demands on our healthcare partners are unprecedented.
  - I am sorry to report the loss of eight more lives to COVID-19.
  - The growth of cases screened positive for variants continues.
  - Today total variant cases is 12,152, almost all of which are the variant B.1.1.7.
  - Vaccine supply for Toronto is presenting a challenge at present.
  - The volumes we need are arriving at a slower and less predictable rate than we had expected, impacting clinics across the system.
  - Appointment booking this week and inquiries about the mobile and pop-up clinics in the hotspot areas suggest that people are eager to be vaccinated, and this is great news.
  - The challenge is supply and the need that creates in getting all those who want to be vaccinated, vaccinated as quickly possible.

## Public Health

- Delivering at current levels of vaccination – or better yet, reaching our maximum capacity to vaccinate – will require more vaccine than is in the pipeline at present, and delivered on a more reliable basis.
- Vaccines are in high demand and unpredictable in supply across the entire country.
- I appreciate how hard the Province is trying to deliver the allocations it receives from the federal government and I am certain that all parties are focused on solving the problem.
- Even if vaccine supplies were not an issue, each of us needs to do our part.
- It's as important as ever that we all follow the steps for self-protection and abide by the stay at home order to the maximum extent that we can.
- Physically depriving the virus of the ability to spread is our most powerful tool until such time as vaccinations reach a level in the population where they provide a strong firewall against COVID-19.
- Above all, stay confident that we will get there. There may be bumps in the road. But at the end of the day, everyone who wants to be vaccinated, will be vaccinated.
- I also expect today that there is bound to be some unease for some people around vaccines – now that Canada has reported a first blood clot event connected to the AstraZeneca vaccine.
- A Québec woman is reported to be recovering at home, having experienced a blood clot within two weeks of receiving the AstraZeneca vaccine.
- It is the first event of its kind in Canada, where we have administered about 700,000 AstraZeneca doses.
- In the United States, health authorities are reviewing the Johnson & Johnson vaccine after six people who had received it developed rare blood clots.

- In total more than seven million people have received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in United States which means that these events are extremely rare.
- Review is being done in Europe and Health Canada is reviewing the development as well.
- The risk of developing a blood clot associated with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is estimated presently at about one in 1 million doses.
- By any scientific definition, this is a very rare risk.
- But for most people it's information overload out there these days – and often information that's more alarming than reassuring.
- So I want to reassure you.
- News about the vaccines emerges frequently.
- There's a lot of information available on the internet and some very unqualified vaccine skeptics sowing fear and misinformation through social media.
- Given all the stress and uncertainty we've been living with over the past year, it's sometimes difficult to know what to believe.
- Vaccine is a medical intervention, so having questions is understandable. Wanting more information is normal.
- Let me put into context the odds and risks of developing blood clots associated with vaccine, and try and put that one in a million figure in some perspective.
- I found a table of risks in a publication for physicians that helps to illustrate the point – and I chose one practical example of health risk and two that probably seem to most of us as pretty unlikely to happen.

- So, the chance of any of us dying in any accident, at home, in the next year, is 1 in 7,100.
- The chance of being hit in your home by a crashing airplane is 1 in 250,000.
- The chance of drowning in the bath in the next year is calculated at 1 in 685,000.
- And as I said before the current estimated risk from blood clots associated with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is one in 1 million.
- Most importantly though, the events of the last 24-hours show us that all the systems are working to assure safety in vaccines and to thoroughly investigate and understand any adverse events.
- For the Johnson & Johnson vaccine reason has emerged to take a pause and assess, and that is what is being done.
- You can have confidence that the agencies responsible for assuring your safety are taking that responsibility seriously and that if a vaccine is available to you it is safe for you.

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