

**Update on COVID-19**  
**Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health**  
**May 26, 2021 at 3 p.m.**  
**Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.**

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- Thank you Chief, and good afternoon.
- I would also like to take the opportunity to echo the Mayor and Chief Pegg in offering greetings and well wishes to my paramedic colleagues, and especially to Chief McEachen, on the occasion of Paramedics Services Week.
- Thank you for all that you do, and a special thanks and really, really sincere gratitude for all that you have done, and all of the collaboration and partnership that you have shown, over the course of the entire COVID-19 pandemic.
- Today I am reporting 353 new cases of COVID-19.
- 942 people are in the hospital.
- 255 people are in the ICU.
- I am saddened to report seven deaths today.
- Overall the measures of illness are in decline, which means our situation is improving.
- Vaccination is vital to sustaining the downward trends in these figures.
- There are two things though that are important to touch on today, both relating to vaccines and vaccinations.
- The first is to restate that if you're offered a Moderna vaccine you can accept it with confidence. It provides a high level of protection against COVID-19.

- Every vaccine available to Canadians undergoes careful evaluation and review and is monitored constantly after approval for use.
- Moderna and Pfizer are very similar vaccines. And based on clinical studies, after completing the vaccination series, Health Canada describes them both as highly effective in preventing COVID-19.
- We know the vast majority of Torontonians support vaccination.
- If that's not you, let's get to the bottom of why – because we absolutely need as many people as possible to join the ranks of the vaccinated.
- In that respect, I want to flag that currently, around 28 per cent of people aged 80 and over still have not had a first dose of vaccine.
- Yet, those above 80 are the most vulnerable to the threat of COVID.
- We know that many older adults prefer to go to their own doctor for care.
- At this point, access to vaccines through doctors' offices is limited, for a number of logistical reasons which may help to explain some of the gap.
- So please, do what you can to encourage and assist the elders in your life to get a vaccine through the means available now.
- We've all come so far in the past fourteen months, but we should be especially protective and supportive of the eldest people in our lives.
- I also want to restate my challenge to anyone who has received at least one dose of vaccine: share your experience with people you know. Encourage them to get vaccinated if they haven't been.
- I'm thrilled to see that almost 68 per cent of people aged 20 to 24 have already had a first dose.

- Almost 48 per cent of 16 to 19 year-olds have had a first dose too. That's a great achievement for an age group that became eligible so recently.
- But we need everybody to get the job done.
- It may be tempting, knowing so many people around you are vaccinated, to worry less about booking your own appointment.
- But the doctor in me has to remind you: no one has maximum protection until they're fully vaccinated.
- COVID-19 continues to circulate in Toronto and if you're not fully vaccinated, that puts you at risk.
- So we have progress to be happy about but a gap still to close.
- Like all things during COVID, so much of our future depends on the choices we make as individuals in the next few weeks.
- We're doing our part to keep you informed, to urge you to decide and to provide you with the vaccine at clinics – but we're just as happy if the deciding factor for some people is the encouragement from someone they know and someone trust.
- Whatever it takes, please decide in favour of vaccination, protection and peace of mind.