

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
May 5, 2021 at 2 p.m.
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- Thank you Chief Pegg, and good afternoon.
- Today I am reporting 991 new cases of COVID-19.
- 1,162 people are currently in hospital.
- 281 people are currently in intensive care.
- I am also saddened to report nine new deaths today.
- I want to speak to the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine today and the risk of blood clots because I know there's a lot of talk about both this week.
- At this point in time, we are waiting for clarification on when further AstraZeneca deliveries for Toronto will resume and on what scale.
- Nonetheless, it is reasonable to expect this will happen and that many people will have the option of accepting their first or second dose.
- If you are one of them, the likelihood of a serious blood clot occurring is currently accepted as one in 100,000.
- Some set the figure at one in 250,000.
- I would suggest we can, in fact, look to the UK for confidence in the low risk of receiving the vaccine.
- More than 22 million first doses of AstraZeneca have been given there. And thus far, there have been 209 cases of blood clots related to the vaccine. This equates to 9.3 cases per one million doses.

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- In Canada, more than 1.7 million doses have been delivered here and the risk of blood clot related side effects continues to be considered very rare.
- We are dealing with a new virus. As such, we are all in unexplored territory and our knowledge related to the virus continues to grow.
- There is a huge drive in medical and scientific communities to produce further understanding of the virus and the vaccines.
- We now have more than a year of evidence to show what COVID-19 can do.
- What we know today is that the vaccines work.
- We know that they are our very best protection against COVID-19.
- We know that in Toronto right now there are about 260 cases of COVID-19 per week per 100,000 people.
- Many physicians have said – and I agree – that the odds of getting COVID-19 without the protection of a vaccination are far, far greater than the risk of a serious complication as a result of being vaccinated.
- I think the facts bear this out.
- But we all have to decide for ourselves what we think is right for us.
- If you have doubts or concerns, please seek out reliable advice from credible sources.
- In my view, your best protection is a vaccination, because COVID-19 isn't going away any time soon.
- The case count figures over the last few days suggest a stabilization – although at a level that remains high and continues to cause severe illness and death.



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- While any improvement is welcome news, we have to greet this improvement with caution.
- I liken it to a patient being re-categorized from critical to serious condition.
- It's a better condition, but a long way from best.
- And that is where we are, as very early signs of improvement seem to be emerging.

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