

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
May 10, 2021 at 2 p.m.
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- Thank you Mayor Tory, and good afternoon. Let me echo the Mayor's greetings of happy Nursing Week to nursing colleagues everywhere, but especially those with whom I am privileged to work at Toronto Public Health.
- Today I am reporting 2,529 new cases of COVID-19.
- I want to remind you that when we report on Mondays the case count figures include all cases since the report on Friday, so this averages to 843 cases daily.
- 1,095 people are in the hospital.
- 269 people are in the ICU.
- I am saddened report 37 lives lost to COVID-19 in the last three days.
- As of yesterday, over 1.4 million doses of vaccine have been administered in Toronto.
- As you heard, we are on track to meet and even exceed our next goal of first dose vaccinations for 65 per cent of Torontonians 18 and older by the end of May.
- As the vaccination efforts move forward we are positioning ourselves to enjoy – in time – increasing flexibility and normalcy in daily life.
- We are seeing this in places like the United Kingdom, which is ahead of us in the delivery of vaccines and has lived within the limits of a strict lockdown for many months and is now transitioning out of it on a phased basis.
- We too are moving in the right direction – incrementally.

- These are the facts that define the state of COVID-19 for us in Toronto.
- Our 7-day moving average for new COVID-19 cases is 963.
- To describe the situation another way, the latest rate is 262 cases per 100,000 people per week.
- The good news is that this is the third week in a row with a decline in cases per 100,000 people – but it is still well above the peak from wave two, when it was 244 cases per 100,000 people per week.
- We are starting to see signs for cautious optimism with small decreases in our case numbers.
- The reproductive number is now below 1 – that means spread is slowing.
- The imposition of the emergency brake on April 3rd has already resulted in more than a 43% reduction in transmission.
- Data that show how our population moves about – or mobile device time at home – showed a modest swing toward more time spent at home – from 77 per cent at the end of March following the move to the Grey Zone, now almost back to 80 per cent following the Emergency Brake and Stay-at-Home Order in the beginning of April.
- Yet we still face new daily cases in Toronto close to or above a thousand a day.
- This reflects the nimbleness and infectiousness of the variants.
- We face a much different intruder than we used to.
- Toronto Public Health has looked at projections from modelling as we approach June, taking vaccination and variants of concern into consideration.
- Our models consider a steady rate of vaccination, while assuming that variants of concern are 50 per cent more transmissible than the original variants.

- The projections suggest if all we do is maintain the current level of contact, we can expect approximately 400 cases daily by June 1st, and if we open up and transmission increases by as little as 20 per cent, case counts would be approximately 800 per day by early June.
- I am of the belief that there is little likelihood the facts will change sufficiently by May 20th, when the current Order is set to expire.
- I believe we cannot vaccinate our way out of this third wave – but that vaccination will be a powerful launch pad toward a more normal way of living after this wave passes.
- I believe vaccination can powerfully mitigate the risks of a fourth wave.
- I am convinced that warm weather and the outdoors can be allies in reducing the spread of COVID-19 and give people more opportunities to do more outside as the weather changes.
- I very much want schools to reopen again.
- To leave the resolution of the pandemic to chance or to move too soon would be to follow the worst possible path through this pandemic.
- My peers and I don't want any kind of restriction in place for one minute longer than is necessary – but we have seen what happens when we rush to reopen. It always leads us back to a resurgence of daily illness, hospitalizations and ultimately deaths.
- So we will be working toward a means to get everyone where we all want to be, and what we have to achieve to protect it.