

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
June 16, 2021 at 2 p.m.
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- Thank you Mayor Tory, and good afternoon.
- Today there are 84 new cases of COVID-19 in Toronto.
- 605 people are in the hospital.
- 178 people are in the ICU.
- I am sorry to say that there have been 7 more deaths from COVID-19.
- New polling released Monday found that in Ontario 89 per cent of respondents have or will be vaccinated against the virus.
- This is important and reassuring because as we push through COVID-19 vaccinations in the next few weeks it has to be all hands on deck.
- To one degree or another, the Delta variant poses a demonstrated risk of infection to anyone who is not fully vaccinated – and that is everyone who has only had one dose of vaccine or had none at all.
- From a health point of view, I'm most concerned today about people who haven't been vaccinated at all – particularly the older you get.
- For the rest of us, what happens with Delta could cause problems that may disrupt reopening and moving forward to where we all want to be.
- So all of us need to get or complete our vaccinations as soon as possible.
- I want to give you a quick snapshot of Delta given how events have unfolded in the United Kingdom – where Delta is dominant and the news is mixed.

Public Health

- Monday night the government in the U.K. delayed the final stage of lifting public health measures until July 19th.
- The lifting would have ended all limits on interaction between people in all settings.
- The restrictions affect the size of gatherings and public events and, significantly, the ability to travel, which is frustrating in everyday life and adds more hardship for everyone who earns their living in tourism, travel and hospitality.
- It couldn't have been easy for the government to take this step.
- But 55 per cent of the population in the UK still has had either just one dose or no vaccination at all.
- And more than 90 per cent of new COVID-19 cases there are the Delta variant.
- The Delta variant is now understood to be more transmissible than the Alpha – or B1.1.7 variant – which was itself at least 50 per cent more transmissible than the original COVID-19 virus.
- Indoors, Delta is measured as 64 per cent more transmissible than the Alpha variant.
- Outdoors, Delta is estimated to be 40 per cent more transmissible.
- In the United States, cases rose by 1.3 per cent in the last week – but not evenly.
- States where vaccination rates are high continue to see cases fall.
- States where vaccination rates are low are reporting rises.

Public Health

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 6 per cent of new infections are because of the Delta variant. Certain states report that figure to be as high as 18 per cent.
- The facts could not be any clearer. Where there's high vaccination levels, Delta doesn't appear to be a huge threat.
- Where vaccinations are low, it either is or could be.
- Here's the good news, though – and it really is good news.
- Overall, if you have both doses of vaccine, your level of protection from Delta is very high.
- Public Health England says the vaccines are over 90 per cent protective against hospitalization – after two doses.
- When an illness doesn't send you to hospital, that's a good thing.
- Here in Toronto we're approaching 75 per cent of residents 18 and older who've had a first dose.
- Twenty per cent are fully vaccinated.
- That's remarkable, it's reassuring and most importantly it's protection – protection for them and protection for all of us.
- In that respect we will continue to deliver vaccines to everyone who lives in Toronto, while focusing attention and resources on areas of the city where the risk of COVID-19 is highest and where improved and increased vaccination coverage will create the most protection overall.
- When there are increased risks some of us in the city, then all Torontonians are at risk too.



Public Health

- This week and next, the youth vaccination blitz continues throughout the city, building on the 57 and a half per cent of young people who've now received a first dose.
- There are 20 focused youth clinics across our city this week, and a dozen more planned so far for next week.
- If you're between the ages of 12 and 17, now is your time to get your vaccination if you haven't already, so that you can receive your second dose before back-to-school in September.
- While youth getting vaccinated must receive a Pfizer vaccine, vaccination efforts are being made easier, as the Moderna vaccine will be added in significant numbers in Toronto.
- We're expecting almost 102,000 doses of Moderna in the next few days, with another significant infusion expected again next week. This supply will be divided between the City's mass immunization clinics and our vaccination partner network to move the vaccines to people as quickly and as widely as possible.
- Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization or NACI has found "no important difference" between Moderna and Pfizer.
- NACI considers these mRNA vaccines to be interchangeable.
- 129 million doses of Moderna have been delivered in the United States alone.
- Canada, the United States and members of the European Union are among more than 40 countries that have granted the Moderna vaccine authorization for use.
- The new quantities of Moderna vaccine that are coming to Toronto and the whole province couldn't come at a better time.
- The time is now.

- We have the vaccine supply and we have the places to deliver it: City-run and hospital-run immunization clinics, pop-ups and mobile clinics.
- Above and beyond this, supply is being provided by the province to doctors' offices and pharmacies.
- The main thing to remember is we're in a strong position at this point in time, so long as we work to keep it that way.
- Often during the pandemic I told you the future was in your hands and under your control.
- It's never been easier to take that control, and I am asking each of you to take it and begin or complete your vaccinations so that we can drive our vaccination coverage – and our safety and protection – to new heights.

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Media contact: tphmedia@toronto.ca