

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

- Thank you Mayor Tory, and good afternoon.
- Today I am reporting 328 new cases of COVID-19.
- 774 people are in the hospital and 221 people are in the ICU.
- I am saddened to report 14 deaths today.
- To illustrate how far we've come in a month, I want to revisit, briefly, the figures I reported on Monday, May 3rd.
- The average then was 1,037 new COVID-19 cases per day.
- 1,142 people were in the hospital and 272 were in the ICU.
- The dramatic change between then and now speaks for itself: cases have declined significantly, and hospitalizations, while improving, are doing so more modestly, as is expected.
- The changing numbers reflect people taking to heart the stay-at-home order, the steps for self-protection, and the success of the vaccination campaign.
- As the Mayor just stated, already we've seen significant vaccination uptake for people ages 12 to 17.
- In Toronto, close to 75,000 in that age group have already received a first dose of vaccine. That's 46 per cent of this group.
- A Youth Vaccination Strategy is being co-led by Toronto Public Health and SickKids Hospital.



Public Health

- Youth initiatives to support vaccination have so far included City-run immunization clinics, hospital clinics, school pop-up clinics, and mobile clinics led by hospitals, Ontario Health Teams and community partners.
- As we move through June, you will see a focused effort to provide vaccination opportunities for children and young people between the ages of 12 and 17.
- Outreach strategies will put an emphasis on youth in priority postal codes and those who need additional support in accessing vaccines.
- Toronto Public Health and SickKids are working together to create communications for youth, their families and caregivers to address common questions and misconceptions about vaccines and to support informed vaccination consent.
- We have significant capacity to boost youth vaccination numbers to provide protection to them, their families and to position everyone for a return to school in September.
- It is generally found that if a young person does get COVID-19 the course of their illness is mild.
- But we never want to take COVID-19 for granted and we never want to take risks that we don't have to.
- Once COVID is in a home, it can easily infect everyone who lives there. We want to deny COVID-19 the chance to spread whenever we can.
- The Team Toronto sprint strategy efforts, which include youth vaccination, is also ongoing.
- With increased coverage across the City, the next phase of the strategy will leverage data insights, to focus vaccination efforts on neighbourhoods and buildings with low uptake.

Public Health

- One of the things we're keeping an eye on is the B.1.617 variant – or Delta variant – which is rapidly spreading in the United Kingdom, in particular.
- There are 68 confirmed cases of this variant in Toronto.
- Like any virus, it spreads amongst the unprotected – but this variant is showing some capability for infecting even those who are fully vaccinated, albeit generally with a milder illness.
- The main message for us to draw from this is this: get vaccinated and remember that for now it's still really important to be mindful of distance between yourself and others, to wear your mask when you can't keep six feet apart, to do what you can to establish good ventilation indoors and to spend as much time outside if in the company of individuals outside your household.
- There's also work to get done where first vaccine doses are concerned.
- I want to run you through the numbers to illustrate the gaps in certain age categories, because we need as many people as possible to get vaccinated against COVID-19.
- People aged 60 and over are doing well – with one caveat.
- Their first-dose vaccination rate is between 77 and 78 percent – until you reach the threshold for eighty years of age and over.
- There, there's a bit of a lag as that age group only has a little more than 73 per cent with a first dose.
- That leaves 27 per cent unvaccinated – and that's concerning and has been concerning me for a couple of weeks now.
- We do not want any unnecessary suffering from COVID now that we have these powerful protections against it – especially in those who are most vulnerable to COVID.

- If you have an eighty year old in your life, find out if they're vaccinated.
- Find out what you can do to help them get vaccinated if they're not.
- Those 55 to 59 are in a similar state: around 72 per cent of them have received a first dose.
- In contrast, 20 to 24 year olds are leading the way.
- 76 per cent of them have rolled up their sleeves.
- Twenty-five to 29 year olds are a little behind, at 69 per cent.
- Where I see a concerning lag is in a broad band of ages from 30 to 54.
- First-dose vaccination rates across these age groups range from 61 to 67 per cent.
- That leaves at least a third of people between 30 and 54 without the protection of a vaccine.
- This age group does a lot of the heavy lifting in daily life: caring for children, caring for elders, and they are the bulk of the workforce.
- We need you in good health.
- So to anyone still thinking about it, now's the time to act.
- There are still vaccination appointments this week and many more in the next couple of weeks.
- I would like to see Toronto as a leader in vaccine uptake in the country and around the world.
- It's good for everybody and it's what will bring us back to a life more like we knew it prior to COVID-19.

- So please, book your appointment and let's keep moving toward where we want to be.

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