

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
July 28, 2021 at 10 a.m.
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- Thank you Chief, and good morning.
- If I may, I would like to take a moment to echo the Mayor and the Chief with a small note of personal thanks myself to all those who played a role in supporting us through these press briefings and especially the people of Toronto.
- Owing to our earlier start today I am presenting the COVID-19 metrics we issued for Tuesday, when we had 29 new cases of COVID-19. Twenty-five people were in hospital, and three in the ICU.
- As well I am sorry to say that there have been three more deaths in Toronto due to COVID-19.
- As the Mayor and the Chief have said, Toronto is entering the next phase of its COVID-19 vaccination program. In this next phase of the vaccination campaign we are building on our mobile successes, and redeploying resources to increase our hyper-local mobile clinic opportunities in focused areas with lower vaccine uptake.
- As of August 23, we will have five times the number of mobile clinic teams in operation than are currently administering vaccines across the city.
- This will allow us to bring vaccines directly into workplaces, and into communities and organizations who are experiencing low-vaccine uptake.
- The most important thing to remember about the changes to City-run immunization clinics is that if you want a first or a second dose we will be delivering them.

- Our approach is changing a little, but our commitment to making vaccine available to you stays the same. City-led opportunities are in addition to the hundreds of pharmacies, health care sector partners and primary care providers who are now delivering COVID-19 vaccines.
- Our most recent data shows that there are approximately 350,000 Torontonians who are eligible for their second dose of vaccine.
- They may have had a scheduling conflict, or perhaps they've forgotten their second appointment.
- Some people may be nervous about their second dose, having heard stories about side effects from family or friends. Or they may think that one dose is sufficient protection against the virus.
- Whatever the reason – and I can't stress this enough – a second dose is critical for your protection.
- Toronto Public Health and our partners are doing everything we can to spread this message: calling, texting and e-mailing all who are eligible for their second dose to get their vaccine as soon as possible.
- I also want to speak briefly today to people worried about reports of breakthrough infections – the rare cases in which a person gets infected by COVID-19 after being fully vaccinated.
- There's not much more to add to what doctors and scientists are already saying, so I will make three key points.
- First and most importantly, breakthrough infections are not common. We hear about them a lot because they are unusual.
- The second is to remember a person with a breakthrough infection almost never gets seriously sick. When they do, there's often other health problems involved.

- And third, the vaccines are still on the job. They are safe and they work.
- We've said from the beginning: the vaccines protect us against serious illness, hospitalization and death.
- Breakthrough infections are typically mild because the vaccines are at work.
- Through vaccination we have gained a great deal. We want to protect that, by completing second doses or getting a first.
- And it is vital to get vaccinated because it's well known that the Delta variant is more infectious than any COVID-19 variant we've seen during this pandemic.
- It is infecting the unvaccinated with an ease that worries me as a doctor.
- So if you aren't vaccinated, I worry about you.
- I also think a lot about children under 12 – who at this point can't get vaccinated.
- That opportunity will probably emerge in the coming months – once we have sufficient data that we can assure parents this is the right thing to do.
- In the meantime, the best way to protect children under 12 is for everyone who's over 12 to get vaccinated.
- So if you've decided to watch from the sidelines for a while, you can derive confidence by looking at all the people around you who got their vaccinations months ago – and who aren't sick, but are protected.
- Here in Canada we are so lucky to have access to vaccines like we do.
- There are hundreds of millions of people around the world who would trade places with us in an instant.



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- Having questions about your own health care is totally normal. If you have questions you need answered before you can decide to get vaccinated, I'm only going to ask you this: find a trustworthy expert and talk with them.
- Get your questions answered. You can call your doctor or a community health care clinic, you can call 3-1-1 or the Toronto Public Health hotline. It's okay if you have questions.
- And here's the best news: there are good answers, good science, good data – and good people who you can trust to tell you the truth about why it's safe to roll up your sleeve and join the hundreds of thousands of people who are safely vaccinated, feeling well, and know that they're protected from COVID-19.

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