

**Update on COVID-19**  
**Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health**  
**February 23, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.**  
**Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.**

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- Thank you Mayor Tory, and good afternoon.
- Looking at Toronto Public Health COVID-19 surveillance indicators, we continue to see positive signs that the Omicron wave is receding. The 7-day moving average for both hospitalizations and ICU admissions continue to decline.
- These, taken along with other indicators of decreasing COVID-19 activity – such as the amount of virus detected in wastewater and the declining number of outbreaks in various settings throughout the City – are positive signs and give us reason to be cautiously optimistic, as we move closer to March 1 and the next phase of the Province’s reopening plan.
- To best support this reopening and our ability to get back to many activities that contribute to our overall health and wellbeing, Toronto Public Health and our Team Toronto partners are increasing our local and community vaccination efforts by expanding mobile clinics and focused community outreach.
- While this includes vaccine events like Vax the East –which the mayor just spoke of, we are also bringing vaccine clinics to schools, malls, and local social service providers, in addition to vaccine that is already available at pharmacies and through primary care providers.
- Toronto Public Health is also prioritizing locations where we can hold repeat clinics, as this builds confidence and trust with the community members and – based on our experiences from the earlier parts of our vaccination campaign – increases vaccine uptake.
- As these new opportunities to get vaccinated become available, I encourage all Toronto residents to get vaccinated if they haven't already done so – whether it's your first, second or third dose.

- Evidence from jurisdictions all over the world shows that the less vaccinated you are, the greater the risk of experiencing severe outcomes from a COVID-19 infection.
- This is especially true, the older you are.
- And we see this is borne out in our most recent local data which shows that if you are 60 years of age and older and have two doses of COVID-19 vaccine – compared to someone who has three doses on board – you are at four times greater risk of being hospitalized, 21 times greater risk of being admitted to ICU and 36 times greater risk of death.
- That’s why we want to ensure that everyone in Toronto has the opportunity to receive the protective benefit of three doses of COVID-19 vaccine – and most especially those at greatest risk.
- The higher the third dose vaccination rate across our entire population, the greater protection is provided to our entire city.
- For the last number of weeks, I have been telling Torontonians that we are looking forward to reopening – to a Spring that we know will come – with cautious optimism. We're looking forward to engaging in activities we haven't been able to in quite some time.
- The proportion of Toronto residents who have rolled up their sleeves and taken up vaccine continues to amaze me. Our vaccination rates are the envy of major cities, the world over. And we continue to see a steady increase in first, second and third doses across the City.
- The incredible efforts by Toronto residents – to get vaccinated *and* to practice the measures of self-protection including masking, physical distancing, and staying home when you're sick – is the reason we are able to participate in re-opening.
- For our part, Toronto Public Health and our Team Toronto partners will continue to bring vaccines to where people live, work, study and play.

- I'm asking Torontonians to continue to come forward for your COVID-19 vaccine – including your third dose if you have yet to do so – and to continue to practice the measures of self-protection as the province moves forward with a gradual and phased reopening.
- By doing so you'll protect yourself and you will protect the most vulnerable in our communities. You will keep us on the trajectory where one day we can put this pandemic behind us.

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