

**Update on COVID-19**  
**Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health**  
**February 1, 2022 at 12:30 p.m.**  
**Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.**

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- Thank you Mayor Tory, and good afternoon.
- We continue to see signs that the Omicron wave is subsiding in Toronto, across numerous indicators.
- Although provincial COVID-19 testing guidelines mean that not everyone can be tested, and that case counts are surely higher than what we are able to report, it is nonetheless encouraging to see that the daily average number of cases continues to decline.
- Over the weekend, Toronto averaged 686 daily cases, which is down from 1,123 the weekend before.
- Likewise, the number of active outbreaks in healthcare settings has declined, from 178 on January 24, to 144 on January 31.
- While there are still large numbers of patients with COVID-19 in hospital and in intensive care, new admissions appear to be slowing over the past week.
- I want to offer my deep gratitude to the healthcare workers, public health staff, and essential workers who have not ceased in their efforts to provide care and support to those in need while working in this very challenging time.
- These are encouraging developments we are seeing in the indicators of COVID activity, and they are directly attributable to the efforts that Toronto residents have made to reduce the impact of COVID-19, by getting vaccinated and continuing to follow public health measures as Omicron has surged in our community.
- To everyone who has stepped up and done their part, thank you.

- Yesterday, the Province removed a number of restrictions as part of its reopening plan. As in-person contacts increase in the coming days and weeks, this gives COVID-19 greater opportunity to spread.
- So in order to support a successful reopening, we must remain vigilant to protect the progress we have made together.
- The COVID-19 vaccine remains one of the most effective ways to protect yourself and others.
- The evidence shows that for those 18 years of age and older, three doses of vaccine offers maximum protection against severe outcomes from the highly transmissible Omicron variant.
- Similarly, vaccination for 5 to 11 year-olds offers important protection for our children, schools, our families and our communities.
- Toronto Public Health and our Team Toronto Kids partners have worked tirelessly for 10 weeks since the vaccine first became available – throughout the Omicron surge – and, so far, we have delivered more than 158,000 doses to children aged 5 to 11.
- I am especially grateful for the support of Toronto school boards and schools to maximize vaccination and outreach opportunities for school-aged children and youth, parents and guardians, teachers, and essential education workers.
- Team Toronto has held 436 school-based vaccine clinics since the end of November. This includes the 90 school-based clinics held in the past two weeks alone, and there are dozens more planned for the coming weeks.
- And as many parents continue to bring their children forward for vaccination, we know that some parents have questions about vaccination and have not arranged to get their children vaccinated just yet.
- If you are one of these parents, I encourage you to seek out a trusted health care provider and get your questions answered.

- While children are less likely to get really sick from COVID-19, they can still develop serious complications from a COVID-19 infection.
- Even kids who have really mild, initial infections, can have long-term effects which can impact multiple parts of the body including the heart, the lungs, the brain and eyes. These are rare but serious, and can require hospitalization, and even an ICU stay.
- And even if kids don't show symptoms of COVID-19, they can still spread the virus to their family and other people around them.
- COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective and the most closely monitored vaccines in history. In Canada, all vaccines are tracked and monitored for any side effects and their effectiveness.
- It's normal to have questions about vaccines you are considering for your children. Please speak to a knowledgeable health care provider you trust who can help you make decisions about your family's health.
- At Toronto Public Health, we will continue to work with all of our vaccination, health care and community partners to bring vaccine to children and all others across our city.
- Finally, as outlined today by the Ontario Science Table, as we move through reopening, we should expect to see some rise in COVID-19 activity, including hospitalizations and ICU admissions.
- And while we can't eliminate COVID-19, we do have some control over the impact that the virus has on our lives.
- Vaccination makes a difference. Masking and physical distancing make a difference. Limiting the number of in-person interactions we have and staying home when unwell make a difference.

- Together, through our focused individual and collective efforts, we can control the spread of COVID-19 and continue to rise to the challenges before us.

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**Media contact:** [tphmedia@toronto.ca](mailto:tphmedia@toronto.ca)