

Special Advisory for Preventing the Spread of Infection An Urgent Message from the Governor to the residents of Kagawa

Concerning the current situation of COVID-19 at the national level, the Omicron subvariant BA.2 is being replaced by other subvariants such as BA.5. With some areas experiencing a record number of new cases, we are seeing a rapid increase in the spread of the infection.

Since late June, the number of daily new infections in Kagawa has continued to increase when compared with the same day of the week before, and on July 13th, the number of new infections reached a record high of 580. We believe that the situation is comparable to that in the rest of the country.

In addition, regarding the healthcare delivery system, the hospital bed occupation rate has been on the increase since July and is currently below 20%, but if the spread of COVID-19 continues at this rate, this rate is expected to exceed 20% within a short period of time, and even rise higher. Therefore, in accordance with Kagawa's response policy, I have decided to move up one level to the "Infection Prevention Period " starting July 15th, and will make further efforts to prevent the spread of infection.

With the coming three-day weekend and summer vacation, we expect to see an increase in social interaction. Therefore, as a "Special Advisory for Preventing the Spread of Infection", we ask all residents of Kagawa to take even more thorough measures to prevent the spread of infection, even as we slowly go back to normal life.

The key to stopping the spread of COVID-19 is for each and every one of you to remember to:

- Thoroughly implement basic infection prevention measures, such as avoiding the “three Cs”, maintaining an appropriate distance between people, ventilating the room even when the A.C is on and wearing non-woven (fabric) masks.
(in order to avoid heatstroke, remove the mask when it is not needed)
- Thoroughly wash your hands, use hand sanitizer, and disinfect common areas.
- Make sure to also take the appropriate measures at places where many people come and go such as break rooms, changing rooms, and smoking areas, as well as places many people use together regularly such as cafeterias and company dormitories.
- Refrain from going to work or school, going out, etc., if you have even mild symptoms such as a sore throat.
- Only visit restaurants with the "Kagawa Safe Restaurant Certification", which are stores that implement infection prevention measures thoroughly, and wear a mask when speaking.

Also, if you are concerned that you may have been infected, please make use of the free PCR testing program for residents of Kagawa, which has been extended until the end of August.

I ask that elderly people and people with pre-existing conditions take measures to reduce the risk of infection, such as limiting their social interactions to small groups of people they meet on a regular basis.

I would also ask that those meeting with such persons take thorough measures to reduce the risk of infection, such as getting vaccinated (third dose) or taking a free test before meeting to ensure that they are not infected.

The government has reported that booster vaccines (a third dose) effectively restore protection against COVID-19, including against the Omicron strain, and a reduction in the risk of long COVID. If you wish to receive the vaccination, please make an appointment as soon as possible.

In addition, people over 60 years of age and those with pre-existing medical conditions are eligible for a fourth dose of vaccine. With many cities and towns already offering this booster shot, I ask you to please consider a fourth vaccination.

Any actions that show prejudice or discrimination against COVID-19 patients, their families, the medical personnel who are treating them, or their families, will not be tolerated.

Vaccination is not mandatory. It is a personal decision that everyone must make of their own accord. One should not force coworkers or others around oneself to get the vaccine, nor discriminate against those who have not been vaccinated.

I ask that you continue to make decisions and take actions while keeping the rights of others in mind.

In order to restore daily life and normal economic activities as soon as possible, we will do our utmost to protect the health and livelihood of all residents of the prefecture by cooperating with the national government, cities, and towns to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to secure the healthcare delivery system.

July 14th, 2022

HAMADA Keizo, Governor of Kagawa Prefecture