

Advisory Concerning Special Precautions Against the BA.5 Subvariant Governor's request to the residents of Kagawa

Since late July, we continue to see weekdays in which the number of daily new infections is above 1,000, and, with over 1,700 new infections recorded on August 2nd, we are confirming the highest numbers of infection so far.

Regarding the healthcare delivery system, as of yesterday (August 3rd) the hospital bed occupation rate is 40.2% and there has been an individual with severe symptoms. As such, the current "Infection Prevention Period" will be extended for 3 weeks, until August 28th and we will continue to strive to prevent infection.

In Kagawa, as is the case in the rest of Japan, the BA.5 subvariant is replacing others, and we predict that summer vacation and the Obon holiday period will also have an effect on the situation. While we are all trying to return to normal everyday life, I would still request that residents put in even more effort to do the following.

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

- Be thorough with measures such as avoiding the "Three Cs", social distancing, ventilating even when using air conditioning, and wearing non-woven masks (to avoid heat stroke, please remove masks when mask-wearing is not necessary)
- Thoroughly wash and disinfect your hands and disinfect communal spaces
- Please refrain from going to crowded or high risk areas
- When travelling to hometowns or on vacation, or moving between prefectures, please continue to follow infection prevention measures, including avoiding the "Three Cs" and avoid any high risk activities during your travels
- Refrain from going out and to school/work if you experience any symptoms, such as an uncomfortable sensation in the throat or a fever
- Visit restaurants with the "Kagawa Safe Restaurant Certification", where infection prevention measures are thoroughly implemented and wear masks during conversation when out for dinner and drinks

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 limit 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.

Please be mindful that in times of medical shortage, medical care and medical examination facilities (fever outpatient clinics) may request a rapid COVID-19 test prior to appointments.

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, those that work in healthcare or with the elderly, and those at higher risk of infection- such as 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.

You can receive third and fourth doses of the vaccine at the Kagawa Prefecture Mass Vaccination Center on Saturdays and Sundays during August, so please make use of this service.

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.

August 4th 2022

HAMADA Keizo, Governor of Kagawa Prefecture