

The Implementation of “Semi-emergency Coronavirus Measures” in Response to the Spread of the Coronavirus

As we entered August Ehime faced an increase in cases of coronavirus, and the prefecture entered into a “Infection Countermeasures Period” on 8/11. This alert level saw a stronger request for residents to not travel out of prefecture and to cancel or delay any plans that would entail traveling between prefectures or from Matsuyama to other towns/cities. Limitations on group sizes when frequenting restaurants were also implemented. Residents within Matsuyama were requested to try to limit their outings from their homes with a goal of a roughly 50% reduction.

Furthermore, as of 8/16 restaurants serving alcohol were ordered to shorten business hours in order to focus on controlling the spread of the highly infectious delta variant in this fifth wave of the virus.

However, even within hospitals that were closed during the Obon holidays there has been a high level of confirmed cases of the virus. **Matsuyama has also had a record-breaking number of cases, and the severity of the situation increases by the day.**

Due to the highly infectious delta variant, a large number of cases have been occurring daily, and there have been cases of the virus spreading throughout households and work places observed. Since positive cases have already been discovered that are linked to individuals that traveled or visited Ehime during the Obon holidays, **it is expected that there will be an even larger influx of cases as the effects of travel during the period come to light.**

Due to these worries I contacted Minister Nishimura of the Economic Revitalization Ministry and informed him of Ehime’s current situation. I inquired on how “semi-emergency coronavirus measures” are implemented and within the day it was officially determined by the national government that **Ehime would qualify as a region to implement “semi-emergency coronavirus measures” from 8/20 to 9/12.**

The people of Ehime should understand that as the virus has spread throughout Japan, it has also had a large affect on Ehime.

Ehime is in a dire situation where semi-emergency measures are necessary.

With the implementation of semi-emergency measures, there will be stronger requests made towards residents during this “Infection Countermeasure Period.” Specifically, restaurants in Matsuyama should:

- Limit opening hours till 20:00
- Not serve alcoholic beverages (All day. Bringing in alcohol is also prohibited)

All residents of Ehime will be requested to:

- Refrain from leaving home unnecessarily
- Refrain from frequenting restaurants past 8:00 PM

In order to break the chains of infection it is of utmost importance to limit contact between people. In order to do so, it is important that every individual monitors their daily activity by:

- Ideally shopping by themselves during times where stores aren't crowded.
- Lessen how many times you shop (Ex: from 4 to 2 times a week. Use delivery for non-emergency supplies. Etc.)
- Order take out or delivery instead of eating at restaurants
- Postpone any sports or club events until the spread of the virus has settled.

At minimum, the goal of “lessening outings by 50%” should be a priority for Matsuyama, which is in a state of semi-emergency.

Back in April when strong countermeasures were implemented, the specific actions of the people of Ehime are what lead to the end of the 4th wave.

This 5th wave is much larger than the 4th, but I believe that we can overcome it with the cooperation of the local businesses and people of Ehime. While the strong countermeasures will call for stricter limitations on activity, it is of utmost importance that everyone cooperate and be as alert as possible in order to overcome the current obstacle.