

October 28, 2022

To the people of Ehime,

Announcement Regarding the Alert Level for the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Special Alert Period has been in effect since the alert level was raised in Ehime Prefecture on July 12, continuing even after the declaration to public health crisis due to the BA.5 subvariant ended on September 16.

Thanks to everyone's cooperation, the latest number of in-patients has decreased to about forty people, and the number of daily cases is about about a seventh of what it was during the peak in late August, which is nearing the national average. However, a spike in cases has been recently observed in the Niihama and Saijo area, so please continue to be cautious.

Taking this into consideration, we will transition back to an "Infection Alert Period" starting tomorrow on Saturday, October 29 for all areas except for Niihama and Saijo.

In Niihama and Saijo, the "Special Alert Period" will continue in place given the current situation. For those who live or commute to this area, please be careful for the time being as there is an increased risk of infection.

Furthermore, please remember that you should still practice basic preventive measures even with this transition. Experts are predicting there will be an eighth wave around the time of seasonal influenza and other such outbreaks. Therefore, we would like to ask you to adhere to the following:

1. Continue to practice thorough preventive measures
2. Any socioeconomic activities should take into account the appropriate infection control measures
3. If eligible, be proactive in getting vaccinated to prepare for the incoming influenza season

If these criteria are not followed, and people's lives are in danger or if the medical burden increases, we will have no choice but to raise the alert level back to a Special Alert Period. Please always keep in mind the above, and diligently comply with the following infection control measures in order to continue forward with this "new normal."

Main Changes

- Preventive Measures
 - Basic preventive measures must be practice in preparation for the influenza season.
 - Please be aware that the Special Alert Period is still in effect in the Niihama and Saijo area, and exercise caution when you are there.
- Dining Restrictions
 - There will be no uniform restrictions on the number of people or time, but please be careful and avoid high risk activities.
 - For older adults and others at a high risk of severe illness, please avoid going out in large groups for long periods of time. If possible, please go only after getting vaccinated.
 - Dining in Niihama and Saijo will continue to be restricted to smaller groups and shorter hours.
- Events
 - Participants must comply with any precautions outlined by the organizers.
 - Large-scale events in Niihama and Saijo where participants from all over Japan will come will need to implement thorough infection control measures such as checking proof of vaccination or negative test results.
- Vaccination
 - Vaccination for the Omicron strain is highly encouraged (The minimum interval period you must wait to get the Omicron vaccine has been shortened from five months to three months. You must get the first two doses of the standard vaccine by the end of the year, so please consider getting vaccinated soon if you have not already.)
 - Please be proactive in getting the influenza vaccination as well, although please note that this vaccine is not free.
- Preventive Measures for Older Adults
 - Regardless of the type of vaccine, please get vaccinated with the Omicron vaccine as soon as possible.
 - Older adults who are at a high risk of severe illness should also get the influenza vaccine as soon as possible.

Tokihiro NAKAMURA
Governor of Ehime Prefecture