

## Regarding current measures in response to COVID-19

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Oita Prefecture Novel Coronavirus Infection Countermeasure Headquarters  
Oita Prefecture Emergency Socio-Economic Revitalisation Headquarters

### 1. The situation regarding infection rates

We are entering a period of rapid and widespread infection as the Omicron variant continues to spread, with new cases across the country exceeding 40,000 per day, and infection rates climbing day on day. Since the beginning of the new year, there has been an upward trend in infection rates within the prefecture, with 304 new cases recorded on the day of publication. This breaks the prefectural record of daily case numbers hitherto recorded. Up until now, there have been no severe cases, however the number of new cases per 100,000 people has increased, as has the infection rate of those with an increased risk of developing severe symptoms, such as the elderly, and those with underlying health conditions. As there is concern surrounding an increase in the hospital bed occupancy rate, a comprehensive view has been taken and the current COVID-19 situation has been designated as stage 3.

Taking into account the highly infectious nature of the Omicron variant, we believe that it is necessary to coordinate with each prefecture in Kyushu on countermeasures in order to prevent widespread infection. To this end, on the day of publication all municipalities in Oita Prefecture called for the establishment of ‘Semi-Emergency Coronavirus Measures’ (まん延防止等重点措置) based on the ‘Novel Influenza Special Measures Law’ (‘新型インフルエンザ等対策特別措置法’).

We therefore ask for your understanding and cooperation with regard to the following measures.

### 2. Specific measures

#### I. Regarding leaving your house

As the highly transmissible Omicron variant is spreading rapidly, please refrain from all non-essential outings. If you do leave your house, please closely follow infection countermeasures, such as avoiding mixing with other people.

To the best of your ability, please avoid all non-essential travel to and from regions where infection rates are high and or on the rise.

## II. Regarding travel

Due to the rapid influx in infections within Oita prefecture and neighbouring prefectures, the ‘New Oita Holiday Discount’ (新しいおおいの旅割) holiday subsidy scheme will stop taking new bookings as of 21<sup>st</sup> January. Further, subsidy usage from 27<sup>th</sup> January, including for trips that have already been booked, will be suspended.

## III. Regarding dining establishments, bars, and pubs

There has been a call for the shortening of opening hours of dining establishments, bars, and pubs. We will proceed with considering the details regarding the application of such measures within the parameters of discussions with the central government.

## IV. Regarding group dining

Group dining has been one of the causes of infection since the beginning of the new year, and there have been cluster outbreaks resulting from group dining situations. When dining in a group, please ensure that you choose dining establishments that closely follow infection countermeasures, such as providing apt ventilation. Such establishments are certified under the ‘Reassurance is Appetising PLUS’ (‘Anshin wa oishii purasu’ 安心はおいしいプラス) scheme. Finally, please ensure that in group dining situations you abide by infection countermeasures such as wearing a mask when talking with others; arranging seating such that there is ample space between party members with no overcrowding, for example, by keeping party members to 4 or less; and not moving from your seat.

## V. Regarding karaoke

The risk of airborne infection during karaoke is extremely high, and has resulted in the repeated occurrence of cluster infections. Please follow infection countermeasures as closely as possible. These include choosing karaoke establishments that comply with general business guidelines; wearing a mask; and booking an individual room for your family.

## VI. The response with regard to schools and workplaces

In schools, along with working on ways to avoid crowding as much as is possible, please closely follow infection countermeasures such as avoiding both face-to-face and physical contact as best you can. In order to avoid crowding to and from school, bus transport will continue for the time being. Further, please endeavour to prevent the spread of infection by taking appropriate steps such as making use of rapid antigen test kits, and not hesitating to keep your child back from school

if they or a family member have symptoms of any kind. Please cooperate on such measures in order to protect children.

There have been cluster outbreaks in workplaces. Please ensure the continuation of normal business activities through utilising strategies included in individual company business continuation plans (BCPs), such as working from home and staggered commuting.

#### VII. Large-scale attraction facilities

With consideration of the new Omicron variant, large scale attraction facilities are requested to re-examine infection countermeasures such as visitor limits and event simplification in order to avoid the crowding of visitors.

#### VIII. Regarding support measures for different businesses

The ‘business revival support fund’ (事業復活支援金) system offers monetary benefits of up to 500,000 yen for individuals conducting business and 2,500,000 yen for business entities (as defined in law) that have seen a decrease in sales of 30% or more due to the effects of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

### 3. Measures being taken by the prefecture

#### I. Distribution of Rapid Antigen Test Kits

As a counter-measure against cluster infections, welfare facilities and schools have been provided with rapid antigen test kits. In the event that additional test kits are required, further deliveries will be made, so we ask that you make use of this service. In addition, in order to strengthen our testing infrastructure, ten more designated sites carrying out free-of-charge testing will be opened in the prefecture by the end of this month. This will make for a total of 23 designated testing sites.

#### II. Provision of medical care

We have secured 508 hospital beds, and by 26<sup>th</sup> January we will be expanding our overnight recuperation facilities to a total of nine buildings with 1,079 rooms. In addition to making these preparations, we are also working diligently to expand other areas for the provision of medical care. By 21<sup>st</sup> January, we will also be converting one of the overnight recuperation facilities into a temporary medical facility which will have doctors and nurses on-site 24 hours a day.

Furthermore, so that those infected with COVID-19 can more safely recuperate in their own homes, we are building a cloud-based system that, through the distribution of pulse oximeters, will allow for a prompt response if their

condition worsens.

### III. Third COVID-19 vaccination dose

As of the day of publication, the Prefectural Vaccination Centre has reopened and is working as quickly as possible to administer inoculations to those working in sectors where there is a high risk of coming into contact with infectious persons. Starting from February, inoculations for elderly persons will be carried out where seven months have passed since their second vaccination dose. Inoculations for police personnel, firefighters, those working in childcare, and other essential workers will also be carried out depending on the number of vaccination doses available and the number of reservations made. At the same time, inoculations will also be prioritised for pregnant women in situations where it is feared they may develop serious symptoms.

### 4. Conclusion

We ask that all residents remain vigilant and closely follow infection countermeasures such as maintaining apt ventilation and observing appropriate usage of non-woven masks. In addition, if you are not feeling well, please stay home from work or school and undertake a COVID-19 test and medical examination as soon as possible.