

Regarding the Response to COVID-19 Going Forward

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

1. Current situation regarding infections

In October there were days in the prefecture where the amount of new cases of COVID-19 fell below 200 per day. However, since the beginning of November and the falling temperatures, cases have continued rising. They reached 1,177 yesterday (November 31), which is the first time they have gone above 1,000 since September 9. COVID-19 is spreading once again.

In addition, last week the BQ.1 subvariant, a sublineage of BA.5 was detected for the first time in Oita Prefecture. BQ.1 is epidemic in Europe and America, and while it has the same risk for severe symptoms as BA.5, it is also said to be 1.2 times more easily transferred from person to person. Due caution is needed.

The past two years have taught us that infections will increase in the winter. It's also feared that there will be a dual epidemic of COVID-19 and the seasonal flu this year. Due to these factors, the measures we take from here on are extremely crucial. We once again ask every resident for their continued understanding and support.

2. Fundamental infection countermeasures

In order to coexist with COVID, we ask every resident to continue to do their utmost in complying with fundamental infection countermeasures, such as keeping apt ventilation indoors, wearing masks indoors, washing their hands, and avoiding the three "Cs."

Having apt ventilation is especially crucial. Winter will soon be here in full force, but please try to open windows once every thirty minutes for at least five minutes, or if always leaving them open, make sure there is an opening of at least 10 cm. In addition, we also recommend the dual use of ventilation fans and air purifiers, as well as checking carbon dioxide levels using a monitor.

3. Dining out

When dining out, make sure to dine at a restaurant that takes proper measures against COVID-19, such as those certified under the "Reassurance is Appetizing PLUS" (安心は美味しいプラス *anshin wa oishii purasu*) scheme. Furthermore, avoid speaking in a

loud voice when dining and wear a mask whenever speaking.

4. Vaccine

Infections among children are increasing and can also be seen spreading to said children's parents. The vaccine not only prevents onset of COVID-19, it also helps prevent serious symptoms in the case that one does become infected. Due to this, all residents are expected to make a reasonable effort to get themselves and their children (six months of age or older) vaccinated. There may be parents who hold some concerns, but please consult with your primary care provider and consider getting the vaccine as soon as possible.

In addition, even for the BQ.1 subvariant, the Omicron booster is more effective than traditional vaccines. Currently, vaccinations for those on their third vaccination or later are proceeding with the Omicron booster in every municipality in the prefecture. The waiting time between vaccinations has been reduced from five months to three months, but there are still vaccination tickets from the period where this change was being implemented that display the possible vaccination date as being five months from the previous vaccination. If you have a vaccination ticket, then you can get vaccinated so please do so as soon as possible.

Furthermore, it is also possible to get the flu vaccine at the same time you receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Please consider getting both vaccinations as soon as possible.

5. Conclusion

As the New Year approaches, it brings a season of people coming, going, and dining out with their friends and family. We once again request that everyone remain vigilant and continue to thoroughly follow infection countermeasures.