

Regarding the response to the Novel Coronavirus

20th December 2022

Oita Prefecture Novel Coronavirus Countermeasures Headquarters
Oita Prefecture Emergency Headquarters for Socio-economic Revitalisation

Just as we thought that the spread of the omicron variant had waned, we have seen an upward trend in case numbers since the beginning of November, which corresponds with a decrease in temperature from around that time. There is a continually increasing concern surrounding the hospital bed occupancy rate, which is nearing half of its total capacity at 40%.

In order for everyone to enjoy peace of mind when spending the New Year's holidays with their loved ones, we ask for your understanding and cooperation in acting sensibly and without carelessness, and that you ensure once again that you closely follow the below infection countermeasures.

1. Closely following fundamental infection countermeasures

Please ensure you practice each of the following fundamental infection countermeasures: frequent ventilation, wearing a mask indoors, washing your hands, and avoiding the 3 Cs (closed spaces, crowded places, close-contact settings). Ventilation is extremely important indoors. Please either open a window for 5 minutes every 30 minutes, or keep a window constantly open by 10 centimetres. Additionally, the combined use of a ventilator fan or an air circulator is effective in ensuring ventilation.

2. Regarding holidays and eating out over the New Year's period

When returning home or holidaying over the New Year's period, please ensure you take a test before travelling for the sake of your loved ones.

The opportunities for eating out are bound to increase around this time of the year, however, when eating out, please ensure that you choose a certified 'peace of mind is delicious' (*anshin ha oishii purasu*) store, meaning that it closely follows infection countermeasures. Alongside this, please refrain from speaking loudly when eating out, and wear a mask when conversing.

3. Infection countermeasures regarding elderly care facilities

Of the total number of people hospitalised with Covid-19, over 90% of these are over 60 years of age. Additionally, there is a frequent occurrence of cluster infections in elderly care facilities. The prefecture is responding accordingly by delivering rapid antigen test kits to these facilities so that staff can take two tests per week. With regard to each facility, please prevent the virus being brought in

from outside by carrying out tests on new residents when necessary and, as a staff member, ensuring that you take regular tests.

4. Vaccination

Infection is spreading rapidly amongst children and the age group of their parents. Not only does the vaccination prevent the onset of symptoms, but, in the unlikely event of infection, you can expect it to prevent the onset of severe illness. Therefore, it your duty to cooperate on ensuring the vaccination of yourself and infants over 6 months old under your care. Though many parents will be concerned about vaccinations for young children and infants, we ask that you consult your family doctor and consider it seriously.

In addition, vaccinations are proceeding for those who have already had three doses. You can receive a vaccination once you have your vaccination ticket, so we request that you make an appointment as soon as possible once this has been delivered.

Moreover, as there is concern surrounding the dual spread of both Covid-19 and influenza, please also ensure you receive your vaccination for influenza as soon as possible.

5. Testing, examination, and vaccination process over the New Year's holiday

Regarding testing over the holiday period, you can find information on the planned closures of free testing centres in the prefecture on the prefectural homepage. Moreover, those who are not residents of Oita Prefecture, including friends or family who may be visiting or returning home over the holiday period between 24th December and 12th January, are able to make use of these free testing centres.

Further, the Self-testing Application Centre is open to applications for the delivery of self-test kits every day over the holiday period.

Regarding medical examinations, alongside opening temporary outpatient facilities with cooperation from medical associations, the number of doctors on duty over the holidays will be increased.

With regard to vaccinations, we request that you receive your vaccination as soon as possible, as many vaccination facilities will be closed over the holiday period.

6. Conclusion

It is vital that each and every individual in the prefecture ensures they work actively to prevent the spread of infection. Please take good care of yourself

over the holiday period whilst observing infection countermeasures. We wish you a happy and healthy new year