

Countermeasure Period to Protect the Medical System as We Continue Socioeconomic Activities.

【Request Period】 Saturday, September 17 – Friday, September 30 2022

Basic Concept

To protect the medical system as we continue socioeconomic activities, based on article 24, section 9 of the Act on Special Measures Against COVID-19 (hereinafter referred to as “The Act”), requests will be made to prefectural residents and businesses, and any necessary cooperation will be encouraged.

Area

The entirety of Okinawa prefecture

Current Situation

In Okinawa prefecture, since last June BA.5 has become the dominant strain and we have experienced the rapid spread of COVID-19 cases with the number of newly confirmed positive cases continuing to reach record highs. However, since early August the number of cases is decreasing.

The number of newly confirmed positive cases per 100,000 population in the last week was 398 as of September 14 (as of September 7: 752) and it is 0.53 times more than the previous week. We expect the number of newly confirmed positive cases will continue to decrease.

On September 13, we have lowered the current medical phase in the Okinawa mainland area from the emergency phase to phase 5. Although there are still some medical institutions that are partially suspending their primary emergency outpatient services, the current medical shortage is being eased.

On the other hand, although the number of patients who are being treated in elderly facilities is slowly declining, which surpassed 1,800 cases at the peak, 315 people are still being treated and 15 of whom are receiving oxygen as of September 14.

Continuing the measures to protect the medical system and taking thorough infection prevention measures will resolve the current medical shortage, as well as lead to the resumption of socioeconomic activities.

We would appreciate the cooperation of all prefectural residents and businesses.

Request to Prefectural Residents

① Please make sure to take thorough COVID-19 countermeasures on a daily basis and **please refrain from going out or traveling to crowded places as well as places with a high risk of infection.**

- If you need to go out or travel, please make sure to avoid “closed spaces, crowded places and close-contact settings”. **As much as possible**, the elderly should refrain from meeting people that they do not live with. In addition, for those who come into contact with elderly people regularly, please refrain from behaviors with a high risk of infection **as much as possible**.
- Make it habit to ventilate, wear a mask properly, use hand sanitizer, and observe your health daily (especially, the elderly, people who have underlying conditions, and expectant mothers).
- In case of infection, keep at least a three-day supply of food, medical antigen test kit, and medicine, for example, fever reducers stocked at home.
- **Please use the Okinawa COVID-19 Countermeasure Personal Support Application (RICCA) on which we share information about the infection situation and vaccination, etc.**

② When you dine and interact with your friends, please avoid large, prolonged gatherings and wear a mask indoors.

- In places where children gather (such as after-school day-cares, cram schools, etc.), adults should check infection control measures such as the ventilation and proper usage of masks.
- Dine with no more than 4 people, for no more than 2 hours.
- As much as possible, have dinner only with family members whom you live with or people who are always with you.
- Please refrain from attending events where large groups of people are unmasked or please confirm negative results with COVID-19 tests beforehand.
- Please do not bring alcohol to an event that you participate in.
- When dining, use an "Infection Prevention Measure Certified Facility", avoid visiting restaurants and other facilities which are not taking thorough infection prevention measures.

③ If you have any symptoms such as a fever, sore throat, cough, or runny nose please refrain from going to work, school, on outings, and to group dining.

- If you have any cold symptoms, please make sure to avoid the elderly and expectant mothers for a week as they have a higher risk of a severe case of COVID-19.
- If you feel unwell or you may have been infected, you can use a medical antigen test kit if you have a mild symptoms or consult the Prefectural Call Center.
- To protect the emergency medical system, please refrain from going to the emergency room if you have a mild illness or to take a COVID-19 test and refrain from the misuse of ambulances.

④ People aged 60 years and over, should receive their fourth COVID-19 vaccination. (Those who have not received their third dose of the vaccine should also be vaccinated as soon as possible).

- Keeping up-to-date with vaccinations reduces the risk of hospitalization and death.
- Residents of elderly care facilities and users of day facilities should receive their vaccination as soon as possible, as they are at higher risk of severe infection.
- People at risk of a severe case, such as those who have underlying conditions such as hypertension, obesity, and those who smoke, can also lower their risk of a severe case by receiving their vaccination.

【To Travelers (Those Considering a Travel to Okinawa)】

【Before your visit: Request for cooperation, not based on a law】

【After your visit: Request for cooperation, based on The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9】

- **Before traveling to Okinawa, please conduct a thorough health check. If you feel unwell, postpone your trip. We look forward to seeing you another time. Before arriving and during your stay in Okinawa, please make sure to take basic infection prevention measures.**
- **For those that will visit Okinawa on a school trip, take thorough infection prevention measures, and also make sure to act in accordance with the "Okinawa School Trip Quarantine and Sightseeing Guidelines" and other relevant guidelines.**
- **For other purposes, such as travel, before your arrival in Okinawa, update your vaccination 2 weeks before the trip starts, or confirm a negative result with a PCR test or other tests.**
- **For those who are unable to take a PCR test or antigen test in advance, we have established a system where one can take a PCR test upon their arrival at Naha Airport, Miyako Airport, Shimojishima Airport, New Ishigaki Airport, and Kumejima Airport.**
- **During your stay, please take the same actions that are expected of Prefectural residents as requested by this response policy, including the use of an Infection Prevention Measure Certified Facility.**
- **For those who have chronic illnesses, take it easy and take care of your health during your stay. Also, ensure you have adequate supplies of prescribed medications, and bring extra medication when you visit Okinawa.**
- **Please use the Okinawa COVID-19 Countermeasure Personal Support Application (RICCA) on which we share information about the infection situation and vaccination, etc.**
- **If you feel unwell or have a fever during your stay, please consult the "Traveler's Access Center Okinawa".**

【Traveler's Access Center Okinawa (TACO)】

Phone: 098-840-1677 Operation hour: 8:00 ~21:00

Requests to Restaurants

【○ : Request for cooperation, based on The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9】
 【● : Request for cooperation, not based on a law】

<p>Target Facilities</p>	<p>[Restaurants] Restaurants (excluding takeout and delivery) [Entertainment facilities / wedding halls] Bars, karaoke boxes, wedding halls (etc.) that possess a restaurant business license under the Food Sanitation Act</p>
<p>Details of the Requests</p>	<p>○For all restaurants, allow only one group at one table with no more than 4 persons. (Excluding cases when care or assistance is necessary.)</p> <p>(For weddings and other ceremonial events, please follow the request for holding events.)</p> <p>●For all restaurants, please encourage customers to dine for no more than 2 hours.</p> <p>○For Infection Prevention Measure Certified Facilities, please continue to ensure that the restaurant is safe and secure by taking thorough infection prevention measures, including compliance with the industry specific guidelines.</p> <p>①Hygiene management of restaurant: Sufficient ventilation in the restaurant, disinfection of area and utensils touched by customers.</p> <p>②Safety and hygiene management of staff: Conducting thorough health management of staff, including daily body temperature checks before work. Recommend vaccination.</p> <p>③Safety for customers: Body temperature checks upon entry, sanitizing hands thoroughly, spaced seating, etc.</p> <p>(Deny entry to a customer who has symptoms, such as a fever, even if they are mild. Ensure customers comply with infection prevention measures.)</p> <p>○For restaurants that are not certified with Infection Prevention Measure Certified Facility Certification, we encourage these facilities to take thorough infection prevention measures and to get certified with "Infection Prevention Measure Certified Facility" as soon as possible.</p>

Request when Holding Events

【The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9: Requests for Cooperation】

- ◆ For event organizers, **please** hold events in accordance with the Event Capacity Requirements (maximum number of people, venue capacity, etc.).
- ◆ **In such cases, when the same event is held in areas marked with 'with loud spectator cheering and/or shouting' and 'free from loud spectator cheering /shouting' areas, the maximum number of people for each area shall be up to half of the capacity (with loud spectator cheering and/or shouting) and up to capacity (free from loud spectator cheering /shouting).**

	Maximum Venue Capacity(*1)		
	Less than 5,000 people	Over 5,000 ~ less than 10,000 people	Over 10,000 people
Events Free from Loud Spectator Cheering /Shouting	Up to capacity	Up to 5,000 people (*3)	Up to Half of the capacity (*3)
Events with Loud Spectator Cheering and/or Shouting (*2)	Up to Half of the capacity		

*1: In the case a maximum venue capacity has not been set, the capacity shall be as follows.

▪ Events Free from Loud Spectator Cheering /Shouting → The spacing should be sufficient to avoid having close-contact between people (There should be enough to avoid person-to-person contact at a minimum).

▪ Events with Loud Spectator Cheering and/or Shouting → Sufficient space (2m as much as possible and at least 1m) between people must be provided.

*2: A "Loud Voice" is defined as "a spectator ①speaking louder than their usual voice and ②speaking up repeatedly and continuously", and events that actively encourage this practice or do not take sufficient necessary countermeasures are classified as "Events where spectators tend to shout".

*3: The maximum number of people is allowed up to the capacity of the facility, under the condition that an infection prevention safety plan is prepared and implemented.

- **Event Organizers should thoroughly comply with the industry specific guidelines,**
- **For events with more than 1,000 participants, the organizers must prepare and submit an Infection Prevention Safety Plan with specific measures to the prefectural government at least two weeks before the event. If it doesn't meet the request by the prefectural government, review the event upon the request of the prefectural government or refrain from holding an event.**
- **Respond promptly in the event of a national outbreak or cluster at an event, and if the national government revises its industry-specific guidelines, capacity requirements and maximum number of people.**
- **For events with large numbers of people, recommend visitors to update with vaccinations or confirm negative results by PCR or other tests in advance.**
- **If food or drink is served, voluntary restraint should be requested outside the dedicated eating and drinking areas. However, this does not apply in environments where measures can be taken to ensure the wearing of masks except when eating or drinking, or to shorten eating and drinking times in order to reduce the time spent unmasking, on the basis that there is no vocalization.**
- **we ask you to consider postponing the timing of any events involving the serving of alcohol as much as possible.**
- **For events that do not have an Infection Prevention Safety Plan, infection control measures should be thoroughly implemented through the preparation of checklists and other. For more details, see the "Restrictions on holding events".**
(<https://www.pref.okinawa.lg.jp/site/chijiko/kohokoryu/koho/20200828.html>)

- ◆ Participants of an event are asked to ensure they take basic infection control measures in order to reduce the risk of infection, such as going directly to the venue and home.

To Commercial and Visitor-attracting Facilities

【The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9: Requests for Cooperation】

The following infection control measures shall be implemented in sports facilities, amusement centers, cinemas, shopping malls and other facilities as regulated in Article 11, section 1 of the Special Measures Act.

- The compliance with the industry specific guidelines, implementation of thorough infection prevention measures.
- Control and guide visitors so that they do not crowd together (especially when holding events that attract visitors, work to ensure that it is not crowded or that people are close together).
- Requesting that visitors wear masks properly, etc.
- Take effective measures to prevent infection through droplets from conversation, etc. (Especially, for food courts, employing measures such as the installation of acrylic panels, etc. or ensuring seat spacing and thorough ventilation).

To Businesses

【The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9: Requests for Cooperation】

- Ensure that employees take care of their health condition thoroughly and if you feel unwell, do not come to work and do not make anyone who is unwell go to work.
- In cases that an employee tests positive or becomes a close contact of someone COVID-19 positive, negative proof of PCR or other tests shall not be required when the employee goes to work.
- Take measures to prevent dense commuting to and from work, such as working from home (teleworking), videoconferencing and expanding staggered working hours.
- Adhere to the Guidelines for Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 specified by the industry.
- Encourage vaccination in the workplace (please provide an environment conducive to vaccination).
- Provide an environment that makes it easier for employees to nurse and take care of their children in case of home treatment or temporary closure of primary schools, etc. (By utilizing the subsidy for guardians affected by school closures, please establish a paid leave system for employees, etc.).
- Conduct effective indoor ventilation and other measures to deal with aerosol infections, such as the constant operation of ventilation fans and additional window openings.
- In elderly and disabled care facilities, infection control measures should be thoroughly implemented to prevent infection of facility users, such as wearing masks during recreation, opening windows during pick-up and drop-off, conducting visits **while taking thorough countermeasures** such as advance testing, and separating the lines of flow at day care facilities.
- In elderly care facilities and facilities for persons with disabilities, conduct regular testing for employees and vaccination should be recommended to users.

Implementation of Initiatives in Cooperation with the Prefecture in each Municipality.

【The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9: Requests for Cooperation】

- Raise awareness of infection prevention measures among local residents and call for cooperation from residents' associations, etc., by using the information vehicles and disaster warning systems.
- Municipalities that are in charge of vaccination should accelerate the third and fourth vaccination.
- Please check the vaccination status of elderly persons requiring care and encourage them to receive vaccination through care managers and other care professionals.
- For events that do not meet the Prefectural standards taking place in local municipalities, encourage the review of the event upon the requests of the Okinawa Prefectural Response Policy or encourage the event be cancelled or postponed.

Requests to Schools

【The Act, Article 24, Paragraph 9: Requests for Cooperation】

- Based on the actions on the basis of the Sanitation Management Manuals, etc., please carry out effective indoor ventilation and the correct use of masks in response to the aerosol infection, including the constant operation of ventilation fans and additional window openings.
- Please refrain from educational activities with a particularly high risk of infection (*), regardless of the level in the Manual. Even in areas where infection is not spreading, the implementation of such activities should be carefully considered.
- Thoroughly monitor the health of teachers, staff and students, using health observation charts and health observation apps, and ensure they refrain from going to work, school, club activities, etc. when they are unwell.
- Take measures against heat stroke during summer when temperatures, humidity and heat indexes are high. When outdoors, make sure to inform people to remove their masks if there is no one else around.
- Club activities should be limited to approximately two hours on weekdays (including early morning practice) and three hours on weekends and holidays, and health checks should be carried out at the start of activities and before various competitions, with thorough infection prevention measures such as refraining from activities with a high risk of infection (*).
- Promote the use of RADECO, which allows symptomatic primary and junior high school, high school students and their family members living with them who may be a close contact person to carry out qualitative antigen testing at home.
- In cases that a teacher, staff member or student tests positive or becomes a close contact person, etc., the teacher, staff member, or student shall not be required to submit a negative PCR test or other tests before being allowed to go to work or school.
- *Examples: choral singing and playing of wind instruments such as recorders at close range in a room in music class, dense physical exercise in physical education, etc. (Infection prevention measures based on the characteristics of the Omicron strain from "the 12th Japanese government's coronavirus countermeasures subcommittee".)

Vaccination for the COVID-19 omicron BA.1 subvariant

1 Outline

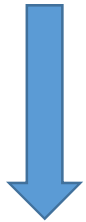
○ The efficacy of the vaccine for the COVID-19 omicron BA.1 subvariant is confirmed by the national government **that it is more effective than the current vaccine in preventing severe symptoms.** Although the efficacy only lasts for a short while, **it is also expected to be effective in preventing infection and preventing the onset.**

As the vaccine has both elements of the Omicron strain and the Original strain, it shows two types of different antigens, it is expected that **various immune responses from them might be more effective against new COVID-19 variants, too.**

○ We will provide vaccinations **for all those who are aged 12 and over and received the initial round of two vaccinations (first and second doses)** from late September.

2 Vaccination Schedule about 300,000 doses

Late September ~ Target : **People who haven't received their fourth dose.**



60 years old
and over



those with underlying
conditions



Healthcare workers, etc.

Subsequently Target : **People who haven't received their third dose.**



Mid-October ~ Target : **Other than the above** (People who have received their third and fourth doses with the conventional vaccine, etc.)

3 Others

○ If delivery of Omicron strain (BA.1) compatible vaccines is delayed due to typhoons and other reasons, the vaccination schedule may be changed from late September.

○ As for the Takeda Pharmaceutical Company's vaccine (Novavax), we continue to provide first dose to third dose.