

February 4, 2021

Message from the Governor

(Extension of the Special Alert Period for the Novel Coronavirus)

I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who has been taking precautionary measures to fight the spread of the coronavirus in their everyday lives.

In order to help prevent the further spread of the virus during the New Year, Ehime prefecture entered a “Special Alert Period” on 1/8. During the Special Alert Period residents have been requested to take extra precautions to prevent the spread, and facilities serving alcohol were instructed to shorten hours.

Thanks to the understanding and efforts of everyone we are now on a clear path to a decrease in cases.

Along with the decrease in new cases, there has also been a decrease in household infections and infections where the route of infection cannot be determined. **We believe that we have reached a point where the risk of the virus spreading widely throughout the prefecture has been subverted.**

With this, the situation surrounding available medical treatment and inpatient care has been mostly resolved. **The peak levels of the burden placed on medical facilities has yet to be reached.** However, roughly 70% of patients currently hospitalized are in their 70s or older. Elderly patients are more likely to stay hospitalized for extended periods of time, and if a trend in an increasing number of cases occurs again, the burden on our medical facilities is also at risk of rising.

While the daily number of cases has been trending downwards across the nation, **the state of emergency within the 10 heavily affected prefectures of Japan has been extended and strong precautions towards bringing in the virus from out of prefecture is still strong.**

Taking into account the current situation, the advice from specialists and the extension of the national state of emergency, **we have decided to extend the “Special Alert Period” till 3/7.**

Our request towards residents to continue exercising extra caution in their everyday lives persists. **Most notably we strongly request residents to take care not to bring in the virus from out of prefecture by avoiding traveling to any of the high risk prefectures or visiting areas where the spread of the virus is still ongoing. Precaution towards dining or meeting with individuals from these areas is also strongly recommended.**

The most important case to avoid is spreading the virus within a household, and then consequently spreading the virus in a medical or elderly facility. It is difficult to prevent the spread of a virus once it has entered a household. As such, it is

important to work towards preventing the virus from ever reaching the household. **Individuals who work in medical or welfare facilities or individuals who live with an individual in these fields should avoid eating with others outside of their family.**

The request for reduced hours for facilities serving alcohol will end on 2/7.

During the 3 weeks from 1/13 till now, dining facilities such as restaurants, wholesale and retail businesses for foods and beverages, producers of agriculture and maritime products, as well as those involved in the transportation industry such as taxis have withstood harsh conditions to help prevent the further spread of the virus.

Along with the end of the shortened hours of service **on 2/8, Ehime will be offering discount coupons to accommodation facilities for residents of Ehime and selling new Go To Eat coupons. By promoting consumer consumption we hope to support the businesses and manufacturers/producers of Ehime.**

I would like to request the people of Ehime to **help push the recovery of Ehime's economy by supporting and dining at restaurants and other related facilities** while still maintaining the precautions of **“not eating out in groups larger than 4 people, not eating out for extended periods of time, and avoiding gatherings involving individuals outside of your family or regular network of acquaintances,”** as well as **“not dining together with individuals from high risk areas.”**

Even a little carelessness and relaxation can result in the fast spread of the virus.

In order to properly take control of the infection and greatly lower the burden on medical facilities, **February is a very important month for precautionary measures.**

In order to overcome this hurdle together and safely experience the farewells and greetings during the special months of March and April with a smile on our faces, **it is of utmost importance that everyone to stay vigilant in their efforts to fight the spread of the virus.**

Details of the Request on Stopping the Spread (Avoiding Infection)

- **Refrain from traveling to areas deemed high risk (Tokyo, Saitama Prefecture, Chiba Prefecture, Kanagawa Prefecture, Gifu Prefecture, Aichi Prefecture, Kyoto Prefecture, Osaka Prefecture, Hyogo Prefecture, Fukuoka Prefecture).**

*If travel must be done (exams, medical reasons, familial ceremonies, etc.), take extra precautionary measure.

*When returning from outside the prefecture, take two weeks to carefully monitor your health and avoid participating in any gatherings.

- **Take note of the following concerning group outings (such as drinking parties)**
 - **Do not gather in large groups (5 or more people) for extended periods of time.**

*When gathering with people you see daily, do so in groups of less than four and only for short periods.

- Individuals not feeling well should refrain/be prevented from participating.
- Individuals who have traveled outside of the prefecture or participated in any activities with a high risk of infection within a 2 week time period should avoid group outings.

*Individuals who come into contact with others frequently due to actions such as drinking and bar hopping need to take extra precautions

- Even while eating out, masks should not be taken off outside of eating, and individuals should not speak loudly.

➤ Be wary of the following “5 situations” that have an increased risk of infection

1. Group outings involving alcohol
2. Dining in large groups and/or dining out for extended periods of time
3. Conversing without wearing a mask
4. Living with others in a closely confined space
5. Changing locations

➤ Pay Close Attention to Your Daily Health

- If you are showing symptoms avoid going outside and seek consultation with and receive an examination from your primary care doctor.
- Get plenty of rest and sleep to help boost your immune response system.

➤ Support Businesses and Manufacturers/Producers

- While taking in proper precautionary measures, utilize Go To Eat coupons or coupons for accommodations within Ehime to help support business and manufacturers/producers.

Precautions to avoid household infections

1. Wash and disinfect your hands and belongings (such as your phone) when returning home.
2. Periodically disinfect shared items/appliances (doorknobs, handrails, switches, remotes, etc.)
3. Periodically ventilate rooms and keep rooms humidified.
4. Avoid sharing plates and use serving utensils if a large serving plate is used.
5. Make a habit of taking your temperature and make sure wear a mask even inside if you are feeling unwell.

Do not interact heavily with family members in this case.