

August 23, 2022

To the people of Ehime,

Declaration of Public Health Crisis in Ehime Prefecture Due to BA.5 Subvariant of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

On August 9, Ehime Prefecture made an announcement regarding strengthened countermeasures for the BA.5 subvariant and strongly urged everyone to follow a number of requests to protect those at high risk of serious illness.

However, the number of new cases has exceeded 3,000 every day since the end of Obon, and the peak is still not yet within sight.

Furthermore, our healthcare system is in a dire situation where the spike in cases is hindering not only our ability to treat COVID-19 cases, but also to respond to medical needs as a whole.

The president of the Ehime Medical Association and the director of Ehime University Hospital held a press conference on August 20 and delivered the following insights from the medical field:

- Manpower in medical intuitions is decreasing significantly.
- Multiple situations in which healthcare providers had no choice but to partially limit medical treatment have occurred.
- Difficulties accessing healthcare, including emergency care services, have arisen.
- The next 1-2 weeks are crucial. Everyone should act with a sense of urgency and avoid close contact with others.

With this, we have decided to extend the “Strengthened Measures in Ehime Prefecture for the BA.5 Subvariant” from Wednesday, August 31 to Friday, September 16. We will also declare a “Public Health Crisis Due to the BA.5 Subvariant,” which includes further measures to restrict activities.

We ask that everyone be especially aware of the severity of the situation, and for your understanding and cooperation in taking the necessary actions to reduce the risk of infection so we can protect those at higher risk of serious illness and avoid a health crisis.

Change Personal Behavior to Reduce the Risk of Infection

- Strengthen individual preventive measures.
- Restrict activity to reduce the chance for close contact.
- Postpone plans to meet with people or go out wherever possible.

Further Strengthening of Measures

1. Reinforcement of dining restrictions
 - a. No more than 4 people to a table; no moving between tables.
 - b. Meal gatherings should generally last no longer than 2 hours, and dining at certified restaurants is recommended.
2. Stricter preventive measures for events
 - a. Events and other activities involving the prefecture will be scaled down, while sufficient measures such as confirming vaccination status or negative test results will be enforced. Events will be postponed or canceled wherever possible.
3. Reservations for the New Mican Discount will be suspended
 - a. New reservations will not be accepted until September 16.

Understanding and Cooperation with Healthcare Providers

1. Seek medical care appropriate to your symptoms and call an ambulance if necessary
 - a. Individuals in their 20s to 40s with no underlying medical conditions should remain at home and take over-the-counter medication (e.g., antipyretics) even if they exhibit symptoms.
2. New initiatives to reduce the healthcare burden
 - a. Individuals in their 20s to 40s who are not at risk of severe illness should register at the Registration Desk for People with COVID-19 (will begin August 26).
 - b. Asymptomatic individuals who test positive with self-test kits or similar should use the Medical Treatment Notification System.
 - c. Individuals who are self-isolating at home should contact the Medical Consultation Desk for Self-Isolating Persons.
3. Vaccinate as early as possible
 - a. Older adults should get their fourth vaccine dose of any type as soon as possible to reduce the risk of serious illness.
 - b. Children 5-11 years old should also be considered for vaccination as recommended by the Japan Pediatric Society.

Tokihiro NAKAMURA
Governor of Ehime Prefecture