

## Future Countermeasures against the Novel Coronavirus Infection

I would like to express my gratitude to the citizens of Ehime Prefecture for their cooperation in preventing the spread of the coronavirus infection.

The infection situation in the prefecture since August has become more serious since the end of the Bon Festival, and at its peak, more than 100 people were confirmed to test positive for the virus, which is an unprecedented spread of the infection that this prefecture has never experienced before.

Particularly in Matsuyama City, where the spread of the disease was widespread, the strong infectious power of the delta strain, combined with the large number of new cases confirmed every day, led to a critical situation in which infections spread one after another in homes and workplaces. In addition, in the four cities of Toyo (Imabari, Niihama, Saijo, and Shikokuchuo), a large number of positive cases were confirmed every day, and multiple clusters were identified, leading to fears that the spread of the disease would become more serious.

As a result of the government's "Priority Measures to Prevent the Spread of the Disease," we have been implementing intensive measures since August 20, including a prefecture-wide request to refrain from going out unnecessarily and a request to restaurants to stop serving alcoholic beverages. Thanks to these efforts, **at the end of August the number of new positive cases per 100,000 residents has dropped to the stage 2 level.**

However,

- New positive cases have been confirmed every day in Matsuyama City, and a certain risk of infection is considered to remain.
- Sporadic cases of infection that indicate the spread of the disease have been confirmed in cities and towns other than Matsuyama City.
- Although the infection situation in neighboring prefectures is in a downward trend, it is still at a high level.

Taking these factors into consideration, **the risk of reemergence of the infection in the prefecture must still be assessed as high. In order to prevent a rebound of cases, we believe that we must continue to be very vigilant.**

For this reason, **we have decided to maintain our own alert level at the maximum "infection countermeasure period" even after the 13th,** when the "priority measures to prevent the spread of the disease" will be completed in our prefecture. The period will last for two weeks from Monday, September 13 to Sunday, September 26.

"As part of the "infection control period," **restaurants serving alcoholic beverages in Matsuyama City will be asked to shorten their business hours to 20:00.**

However, **"certified restaurants" (Egao no Anshin Restaurants) that have taken thorough countermeasures against infection will be allowed to stay open until 21:00.**

In addition, all restaurants and eateries in the prefecture will be asked to refrain from holding events that attract an unspecified number of people and are expected to be crowded.

This request was made in response to the "anniversary events and large-scale parties" held at several restaurants in the downtown area of Matsuyama City in late July, which raised concerns about the spread of the infection unnoticed.

In addition, **we will continue to request the people of Matsuyama City to refrain from going out unnecessarily, aiming for a 50% reduction in the number of outings. We also request that people in the four cities of Toyo (Imabari, Niihama, Saijo, and Shikokuchuo),** where there are still concerns about the spread of the disease, reduce the number of occasions they go out. We will not set a target to reduce the number of outings as Matsuyama City has done, but we would like to ask you to be more careful in avoiding crowded places and times.

On top of that, **all residents of the prefecture are requested to "refrain from participating in events that attract an unspecified number of people at restaurants and bars and that are expected to be crowded.**

"We will continue to ask people to refrain from unnecessary travel to and from outside of the prefecture, and to have meals with no more than four people, generally within two hours, with whom they normally see.

**We ask for your continued vigilance and cooperation as we work to prevent the reemergence of the virus and resume social and economic activities.**

In the 5th wave, compared to the 4th wave, infection among the elderly and cluster outbreaks in elderly facilities were suppressed, indicating that **the vaccination was highly effective.** Furthermore, those who have received two doses of the vaccine tend to have fewer symptoms.

Vaccination is now underway in the prefecture, **so please get the vaccine if you can.**

However, the public health center has pointed out that **people who have received two doses of the vaccine tend to be more relaxed, for example, talking without wearing a mask.** Vaccination does not reduce the risk of infection to zero. **Even after the vaccination, please do not relax and take all possible measures to avoid infection.**

In addition, in recent cases of infection, **there have been a number of people with mild symptoms such as light-headedness and discomfort in the throat, which are not a fever. If you experience any symptoms other than a fever, please do not go to work or school, and contact a medical institution in advance to seek medical attention.**

Governor of Ehime Prefecture, Tokihiro Nakamura