

【Message Regarding Covid-19】 Dec. 14

- Last week on December 9th, I raised the prefecture's "Infectious Disease Response Level" to special warning (red: the second highest level), and asked the people of Kochi to strengthen their efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19. However, cases have continued to rise, and it is hard to know when things will return to normal.
- On the 12th of December, 27 new cases of Covid-19 were confirmed, our highest number thus far.
- Looking at these cases, we can see many of them are connected to "eating in groups".
- There are many cases where people who are eating out are exposed to the virus, and then go on to expose their family or co-workers. Cases where households with elderly residents, who are at a greater risk for developing a severe infection, are exposed are especially prominent.
- We must not allow the spread of the virus to go any further. For that reason, a new plan of action is needed. I ask that all foodservice establishments, between December 16th and 30th, shorten their business hours by closing at 8 PM. All cooperating establishments will receive a subsidy of 20,000 yen per day (up to 300,000 yen total).
- As it is currently the season for New Year's parties, I understand that this will have a large effect on restaurants. However, we cannot allow the virus to spread further. Though, as I have said before, it is my wish to not limit economic activity, due to the current situation we must work together to stop the spread of the virus. While it pains me to do so, I must ask all restaurants for their understanding and cooperation.
- To all residents of Kochi, though I have previously requested your cooperation until December 16th, I must now request your cooperation until the 30th. For those who are eating out or eating in groups, including for lunch, I ask that groups be no larger than 4 and that you stay no longer than 2 hours.
- Additionally, looking at the past few days, the number of infections among the elderly is increasing. As a result, though there is currently only one case of severe infection, there are now seven patients with moderate symptoms who require oxygen therapy. Therefore, I ask that the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions be especially careful. I once again ask that these individuals refrain from visiting foodservice establishments that serve alcoholic beverages.
- I sincerely apologize for calling for foodservice establishments to curtail their business hours for over two weeks at the end of the year, but my decision comes from the desire to see the prefecture welcome the new year as safely and peacefully as possible. I humbly ask for the cooperation of Kochi's residents and businesses in the points mentioned above.

December 14, 2020

Kochi Prefecture Covid-19 Emergency Response Headquarters Chief
(Governor) Hamada Seiji