

## **【A Message Regarding Covid-19】 (December 9th)**

- Today, due to a sharp increase in the number of Covid-19 infections, I have decided to raise the prefecture's "Infectious Disease Response Level" to "special warning" (red).
- My decision is based on a comparison of data, including this week's number of infections and hospital bed occupancy rates, to guidelines set forth by the country's CoronaVirus Committee. Our numbers place us above stage 2, indicating our need for special precautions.
- Furthermore, the source of exposure for close to half of our cases is currently unknown. This is, unfortunately, evidence that community spread is taking place within the prefecture.
- Looking at how the virus has spread so far, "eating in groups" seems to be the main cause of exposure. Additionally, over the past few days, the number of infections among the elderly (70+) has been quite high.
- Due to this, though I have already requested the assistance of all Kochi residents until the 16th of December, over this remaining week I would further ask that the residents of Kochi cooperate in regards to the next two points.
- Firstly, regarding self-quarantine, though I am not asking for all residents to refrain from going outdoors, elderly residents, as well as those, with underlying conditions, are undeniably at a greater risk. Therefore, I would ask that these individuals refrain from going to foodservice establishments that serve alcoholic beverages.
- My second request is addressed to all people in Kochi, and is in regards to "eating in groups". Specifically, I would ask that group sizes not exceed four people, and that such occasions not exceed 2 hours in length. More generally, I would ask that residents who go to restaurants keep their groups "as small as possible", and their stays "as short as possible".
- We will be carefully monitoring the situation over the next week. Based on what we observe, I will decide to change or maintain my requests pertaining to the points above..
- Ever since this spring, we have been grappling with the need to balance "Economic Recovery" and "Infection Prevention". However, at present we are in a situation that requires more emphasis be placed on "Infection Prevention" than ever before.
- As stated in my previous message, it is my wish that the people of Kochi be able to welcome both Christmas and the New Year as safely as possible. I apologize for any inconveniences this may cause, but I must nonetheless strongly urge all residents for their cooperation, especially in regards to "eating in groups".

December 9, 2020

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