

Kochi's Declaration of Enhanced BA.5 Countermeasures

Kochi Prefecture's COVID-19 Level: Special Measures (Purple)

Period

16th Aug 2022 to 31st Aug 2022

Kochi's Declaration of Enhanced BA.5 Countermeasures

The infection situation in this prefecture has remained extremely high, with **more than 1,000 new daily infections** confirmed since the beginning of August. This includes more than 100 new daily infected elderly people who are at higher risk of severe symptoms.

With the increase in infections among the elderly, hospitalized patients with moderate and above symptoms are also increasing. Our health and medical system are struggling with this difficult situation. We have a continuously high occupancy rate of hospital beds, frequent outbreaks of clusters at medical institutions, and a shortage of manpower caused by infections and close contact among healthcare workers.

If the infection spreads further, we will be in a **critical situation where our medical facilities cannot operate properly**. Therefore, Kochi Prefecture will implement "**Kochi's Enhanced BA.5 Countermeasures**" based on the nation's framework, until the end of August. Kochi residents are urged to follow the requests of this countermeasure to avoid a health and medical care system crisis.

We ask for the understanding and cooperation of all residents of Kochi, in order to bring the situation under control as soon as possible.

Requests as part of Kochi's Declaration of Enhanced BA.5 Countermeasures ①

1 For everyone living in Kochi Prefecture

(1) In order to avoid a health and medical care system crisis

<There is a shortage of outpatient fever clinics>

- For those with symptoms of fever, etc. but **who have relatively mild symptoms and are at low risk of severe illness**, please make use of the prefectural government's **distributed antigen identification test kits** and the **online definitive diagnosis** after self-testing, instead of having a medical examination at an outpatient clinic.
※The launch of the online definitive diagnosis is currently being arranged.

<Emergency departments are also under pressure>

- Please limit the use of ambulances and emergency departments to **cases of genuine emergencies**.
- If you are not sure whether to call an ambulance or visit a hospital, **please call Kochi's emergency medical phone at #7119**.

Requests as part of Kochi's Declaration of Enhanced BA.5 Countermeasures ②

(2) In order to prevent the spread of infection

- The **elderly and people with underlying medical conditions are to refrain as much as possible from going out unnecessarily** to protect their own lives and health.
- Do your best to refrain from visiting those who are at high risk of becoming severely ill, like the elderly and those with medical conditions, to protect them. If you need to visit them, please test negative before visiting.
- When going out, take the infection prevention measures, and **do your best to move in a small group consisting of family members or people whom you usually meet with.**
- The **temporary test center at JR Kochi Station's operation** will be extended until end-August. **Proactively use** the center if you are concerned that you may be infected, or have a **high need to prevent infection**, such as being in contact with the elderly or dining in a large group.

2 For business owners

- **Promote teleworking, etc.**, and ensure that employees take care of their physical condition and ensure an **environment in which they can take leave** even if they are only slightly unwell.
- When an employee returns from work after being infected or having been a close contact, please **do not require them to present a medical certificate.**

【COVID-19】Requests to everyone in Kochi Prefecture (1 / 3)

Kochi Prefecture's COVID-19 Level: **Purple - Special Measures** (as of 16th August 2022)

Requests from 16th August to 31st August

○For everyone living in Kochi Prefecture

- (1) **Take infection prevention measures**, including the correct use of non-woven masks (**see attached for more details on mask-wearing; both indoors, outdoors and regarding children**), avoidance of the 3Cs, adequate ventilation measures, and frequent hand disinfection (**especially those who are at high risk of severe symptoms, such as the elderly, people with underlying medical conditions, and the unvaccinated**)
- (2) A third dose of vaccine restores the effectiveness of the vaccine against infection and decreases the severity of the symptoms. **Get your third vaccine as soon as possible**, regardless of the manufacturer. Infection numbers continue to persist throughout the prefecture, particularly amongst the younger generation with low third vaccination rates. **Younger generations** should also be proactive in getting their third vaccine. The **fourth dose of the vaccine** is being distributed with the aim of preventing severe symptoms when infected. **People 60 years old and over, and those 18 years and over who have an underlying medical condition**, should receive their fourth dose as soon as possible.
- (3) **Take infection prevention measures at home**, including ventilating rooms, disinfecting common areas, avoiding the sharing of towels and crockery. **Households living with people at high risk of severe symptoms are to wear masks when talking, even at home.**
- (4) To prepare for recuperation at home in the event of infection, **stockpile food and daily necessities on a regular basis, just like for disasters.**
- (5) Install the COVID-19 Contact Application, "COCOA". It will notify you of close contact with COVID-19 positive users.
- (6) Do not talk badly or discriminate against healthcare workers, infected people, and their families.
- (7) **People with symptoms should visit a registered medical institution*¹** for a free test. **People without symptoms but who are worried about being infected** can take a free test at one of the **prefectural testing centers or local pharmacies*²**.
*1 List of registered medical institutions: https://www.pref.kochi.lg.jp/soshiki/130401/cov19_kensakyouryoku.html
*2 List of pharmacies: <https://www.kochi-muryokensa.com>

○For business owners

- (1) Carry out infection prevention measures according to the industry-specific guidelines (especially mask-wearing)
- (2) Carry out all basic infection prevention measures, such as adequate ventilation, frequent hand disinfection, and disinfection of common areas.
- (3) Reduce people interaction with initiatives like telework and staggered working hours.
- (4) Medical institutions and elderly care facilities should ensure a high level of infection prevention measures and seek to improve them.

1 Regarding eating with others

- (1) When eating with others, **take infective prevention measures**, including the correct use of non-woven masks, avoidance of the 3Cs, adequate ventilation measures, and frequent hand sanitisation.
- (2) **As much as possible, reduce your group size and time together.**
- (3) When conversation is the main activity, wear your masks as much as possible to prevent droplet infection.
- (4) When there is a great need to prevent infection, such as gatherings of many people, the host should confirm that all participants either **have had their third vaccination**, or **have tested negative in a recent antigen qualitative test**. Kochi residents can take a free test at one of the prefectural testing centers.
- (5) When eating out together at a **restaurant**, try your best to choose from the **Kochi Anshinkaisyoku list**.
- (6) In particular, do not do high-risk activities like drinking from the same cup, talking loudly, or singing karaoke without wearing a mask.

[COVID-19] Requests to everyone in Kochi Prefecture (2 / 3)

Kochi Prefecture's COVID-19 Level: **Purple - Special Measures** (as of 16th August 2022)

Requests from 16th August to 31st August

2 Regarding going out and traveling

- (1) When going out, follow the infection prevention measures.
- (2) **Avoid going to high-risk places, such as crowded places, poorly ventilated areas, or facilities with poor infection control measures.**
- (3) Refrain from visiting the elderly in facilities, as much as possible.
- (4) Those who are coming into contact with those who are at high risk of severe symptoms, such as the elderly and people with underlying medical conditions, are recommended to have **at least three doses of vaccines** or **test negative in an antigen qualitative test*** beforehand. ***Kochi residents can take a free test at one of the prefectural testing centers.**
- (5) If you have a fever or are feeling unwell, do not travel to other prefectures.
- (6) **Follow the requests* issued by the governor of your destination prefecture, including what to do when eating out.**
***For example, the Okinawa Prefecture requires visitors to the prefecture to have received three doses of vaccine or to be tested negative in an antigen qualitative test.**

3 Regarding events

When holding events, observe the following points and take infection control measures based on industry-specific guidelines.

- ① For events more than 5,000 people and more than 50% of the facility's capacity, an infection prevention safety plan is to be submitted to the prefecture at least two weeks in advance. With the plan and the prefecture's approval, 100% facility capacity is allowed. *There should be no loud voices.
- ② The final number of attendees for events other than ① should fulfill both the first and second points (whichever is lower)
 - Point 1: Events with no loud voices: 100% capacity | Events with loud voices: 50% capacity
 - Point 2: The possible number of attendees is either 5,000 or 50% of the facility's capacity, whichever is higher.Prepare a "checklist" describing infection prevention measures of your event, publish it on your website or other platforms, and keep it available for one year after the event (submission to the Prefecture is not required).

*Loud voice events are events actively promoting the audience to use a louder than normal voice. Events not taking necessary measures against this count as well.

4 Regarding facilities for the elderly

- (1) Carry out possible additional vaccinations for the elderlies and staff, as quick as possible.
- (2) Thoroughly implement measures based on the **"Manual for Infection Control in Healthcare Settings"**, such as wearing masks, opening windows during pick-up and drop-off, and having workers who have a fever take time off.
- (3) To **prevent infection passing on from staff to the elderlies**, ensure that all staff take infection prevention measures on a daily basis and **manage their health properly.**
- (4) To **prevent infection from visitors**, consider **implementing measures such as online visits.**
- (5) In day care facilities, take more thorough infection control measures, such as separating the movement paths of different users.

【COVID-19】 Requests to everyone in Kochi Prefecture (3 / 3)

Kochi Prefecture's COVID-19 Level: **Purple - Special Measures** (as of 16th August 2022)

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5 Regarding infant and child care facilities

- (1) Prevent infection spread when performing child care activities, such as by separating children into as small groups as possible.
- (2) In the event that adequate infection prevention measures cannot be taken, refrain from holding events involving large groups of people. This includes postponing parent participation events.
- (3) Ensure that children with a fever or other symptoms are not allowed into the facility.
- (4) **Ensure that employees with a fever or other symptoms take leave**, and that the additional early vaccinations available to staff are being taken.

6 Regarding school and club activities

- (1) Seek immediate medical attention should any symptoms such as a cough, sore throat or fever develop.
- (2) Masks are not required to be worn when the risk of heatstroke is high. This includes commuting to and from school, P.E classes and during sports club activities. However, should you remove your mask, ensure that infection prevention measures, such as adequate ventilation and social distancing, are taken.
- (3) Please pay particular attention to the following
 - Refrain from speaking while eating. After finishing eating, ensure masks are worn again before speaking.
 - Refrain from speaking in changing rooms.

Regarding club activities at prefectural schools

- (1) Limit club activities to roughly 2 hours on weekdays and 3 hours on one weekend (choose either Saturday or Sunday). For clubs that are scheduled to compete in a high-level competition within the next two weeks, club activities may run for up to three hours on weekdays and four hours on weekends, after receiving approval from the principal.
- (2) Refrain from playing practice matches with other schools outside the prefecture. Practice matches with schools inside the prefecture are permitted at the discretion of the principal, after taking into account the infection situation on campus. However, please refrain from activities involving overnight stays.

Mask-wearing Guidelines

Based on 05/23/2022 Basic Response Policy
Prepared by the Disaster Management and Prevention Division

Guidelines

- Wearing masks is required as part of infection prevention measures.
- If at least 2 meters of social distancing is observed and there is minimal conversation, wearing masks **indoors** is not required.
- If at least 2 meters of social distancing is observed, wearing masks **outdoors** is not required.
- Even in **outdoor** situations where passing by others is inevitable, such as when commuting to work, **if there is minimal conversation, wearing masks is not required.**

	Social distancing is possible (At least 2 meters)		Social distancing is not possible	
	Indoors (Note 1)	Outdoors	Indoors (Note 1)	Outdoors
Normal Conversation	Wearing masks is advised (Note 2)	Wearing masks is not required (Example 1)	Wearing masks is advised	Wearing masks is advised
Minimal conversation	Wearing masks is not required		Wearing masks is advised (Example 3)	Wearing masks is not required (Example 2)

(Note 1) In places where air circulation is obstructed, such as inside buildings, underground malls or in busses and trains.

(Note 2) Masks may be removed if infection prevention measures, such as adequate ventilation, are in place.

(Example 1) Isolated activities such as running.

(Example 2) When passing by people outdoors, such as when commuting to work.

(Example 3) When on the train.

※In light of preventing heatstroke during summer, it is advised to not wear masks in situations where it is not required.

※Wear masks when meeting with the elderly, visiting the hospital, or other situations involving contact with high-risk individuals.

Regarding Masks for Pre-Elementary School Children

- It is **not advised** for children under the age of 2 (infants and toddlers), to wear masks.
- Similarly, Pre-school children (over the age of 2) are **not required** to wear masks.