

Request for Cooperation Regarding Declaration of Strengthening of Measures Against the BA.5 Variant in Saitama Prefecture

August 26, 2022

In Saitama Prefecture, the number of daily new COVID-19 infections, especially of the Omicron subvariant BA.5, and the hospital bed occupancy rate are continuing to rise, resulting in an increased burden on the health care system.

Taking this situation into account, the declaration of strengthening of measures against the BA.5 variant in Saitama Prefecture has been extended, and we humbly ask for your cooperation with the following requests.

1 Regions Affected

All regions of Saitama Prefecture

2 Period of Effect

August 4, 2022 (Thursday) to September 30, 2022 (Friday)

3 Contents of Declaration of Strengthening of Measures Against the BA.5 Variant

(1) Concerning the Residents of Saitama Prefecture

Requests based on the Act on Special Measures for Pandemic Influenza and New Infectious Diseases Preparedness and Response (henceforth “Act on Special Measures”), Article 24, Paragraph 9

- If you think you may be infected
 - Regardless of whether you are exhibiting infection symptoms or if you have been vaccinated, please get tested.

- ※ This applies to individuals who fulfill the following three conditions:
 - ① You are not exhibiting symptoms, including fever (If you are exhibiting symptoms, please get examined by a doctor.)
 - ② Regardless of whether or not you have been vaccinated, you think you may be infected due to reasons such as having been in an environment with a high risk of infection
 - ③ You reside in Saitama Prefecture

- Outings and Travel
 - When traveling outside of the prefectural borders for purposes such as returning home or recreational travel, please strictly adhere to basic infection-prevention measures (social distancing, wearing a mask, hand washing and sanitation, etc.), and avoid the “Three Cs” in addition to abstaining from high infection-risk behavior.
 - If you feel unwell, please refrain from going out (to dining and drinking facilities, participating in events, etc.)
 - When going out, as much as possible, do so in small groups of family or people who you see regularly, and avoid crowded areas and busy times

○ Use of Dining and Drinking Facilities

- Please use facilities which adhere to industry-specific guidelines, especially Sai-no-Kuni “New Lifestyle” Safety Declaration Plus-certified dining and drinking facilities, which implement measures to protect the lives of their patrons.

○ Infection-Prevention Measures Taking into Account the Characteristics of the Omicron Variant

Please adhere to the following infection-prevention measures to lower the risk of infection :

- Avoid long periods of eating and drinking as much as possible, and do not speak in a loud voice
- Even within your own home, regularly ventilate the rooms and frequently wash your hands
- Strictly adhere to infection-prevention measures for children
- The elderly or those with underlying health conditions should meet only with the people they see regularly, in small groups

Other requests

○ Consideration for Medical Institutions

- If you are at low risk of developing severe illness, please make use of Saitama Prefecture's qualitative antigen test kits mailing service and online diagnosis confirmation after self-diagnosing.
- There have been instances of inconsiderate speech toward health care professionals. We ask that you please be careful with your words while understanding that working in the medical field is very strenuous.

○ When you go out shopping, do so with as few people as possible.

(2) Concerning Businesses (including facility managerial staff)

Requests based on the Act on Special Measures, Article 24, Paragraph 9

(A) Concerning All Businesses

- Use of and Adherence to Industry-Specific Guidelines
 - Please use and adhere to resources such as the Sai-no-Kuni “New Lifestyle” Safety Declaration and industry-specific guidelines, which were designed to assist businesses and facilities with specific independent measures to prevent the spread of infection.

- Infection-Prevention Measures Taking into Account the Characteristics of the Omicron Variant
 - For work places continuing business, please proceed with plans to reduce the number of people in the workplace through systems such as working at home (telework), etc.

- Regarding Efforts in Confirmation of Vaccination and Test Results
 - While increasing the peace of mind and safety of citizens, in an effort to restore and continue socioeconomic activities, please conduct confirmation of vaccination and test results in settings and places thought to have a high risk of infection such as dining and drinking facilities, events, travel, etc. However, please take care that this does not cause unfair discrimination.
 - ※ It is not necessary to check test results for pre-school aged children (generally under 6 years of age) who are accompanied by a parent or other guardian that lives with them. Please check test results for children aged 6-11 until they have received their second vaccine.

(B) Concerning Facility Managerial Staff

- Facilities where cluster infections have previously occurred, or where avoiding the “Three Cs” is difficult, please fully implement infection-prevention measures.
- Please implement effective ventilation practices indoors such as continuously running fans and frequently opening windows, etc. to prevent aerosol infection.

(C) Concerning the Workplace

- Efforts to Reduce the Number of People in the Workplace and Contact Between People
 - Please promote methods to reduce contact between people at work, such as working at home (telework), staggered work hours, commuting by bicycle, etc., as well as methods to reduce crowding in the office etc.
- Infection-Prevention Measures in the Workplace
 - In the workplace, please promote infection-prevention efforts such as hand washing and using hand sanitizer, proper coughing etiquette, maintaining distance between coworkers, diligently ventilating workplaces, disinfecting surfaces touched by many people, refraining from going to work if you have a fever or other symptoms, testing with an antigen kit if you have mild symptoms, reducing business travels by using video conferences, staggering lunch breaks, and implementing infection-prevention measures at employee dormitories and other communal living spaces, etc. Please also avoid the "Three Cs."

Please be especially careful when going to other locations and thoroughly implement infection-prevention measures in break rooms, dressing rooms, and smoking rooms, etc.

○ Consideration for Employees at Risk of Becoming Seriously Ill

- Please show consideration for employees at risk of becoming seriously ill such as the elderly or those who have underlying health conditions, employees who are pregnant, or employees who live with family members in these categories, by listening to their requests for infection-prevention measures such as working from home (telework), staggered work hours, etc.