

Stop the Spread of Omicron Variant by All Means!

Due to the highly infectious **Omicron variant**, we have observed **a continuous spread of COVID-19 infections**. The weekly average of new cases **has exceeded 5,000**, although the rate of increase is slowing down. Many clusters of infections have been reported at **schools, nursery schools, elderly facilities, and business establishments**, and overwhelming hospitals and social stagnation are a great concern. To **prevent further spread of infections**, please **take thorough infection prevention measures suited to combat the Omicron variant**.

[Characteristics of the Omicron variant infection]

- Droplet and aerosol transmissions at poorly ventilated places are common.
- Children are likely to contract the disease, and infections at schools and homes (from children to classmates and family members) are also very common.
- Those with underlying conditions, especially elderly people, tend to have exacerbated symptoms.

1. Thoroughly implement basic infection prevention measures

- **Thoroughly implement basic infection prevention measures in everyday life**, such as **ventilating rooms regularly, wearing face masks properly, frequently washing or disinfecting your hands, keeping a safe distance** from others, and **achieving “Zero Cs”** by avoiding the Three Cs (confined spaces, crowded places, and close contact).
- **Dine in small groups and avoid conversations** while eating. **If you have to talk**, be sure to **wear face masks** (non-woven masks are recommended).
- **Avoid sharing or reusing items and equipment that can be exposed to droplet particles**. If you need to use them, **thoroughly disinfect them** before and after use.
- **Implement infection prevention measures at home**, such as frequently washing or disinfecting your hands, ventilating rooms, and managing the health of family members, especially children.

2. Avoid risky behavior

- **Avoid visiting crowded places at peak hours, and stay in small groups**.
- **Elderly people and those with underlying conditions are requested to take precautions to reduce infection risks**, such as only **meeting with a small number of people that you frequently see**.
- **Facilities that attract many visitors are requested to take thorough infection prevention measures**, such as limiting the entry of visitors, urging them to wear face masks, and preventing droplets from spreading.
- **If you have symptoms, such as fever, refrain from going out**.

3. Get vaccinated

- **Get vaccinated and continue to take basic infection prevention measures even after vaccination**.

Infection prevention measures based on cluster incidents in facilities

Schools, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid activities with a high risk of infections, such as singing in a choir and playing wind instruments (recorders, etc.) in the room without keeping a physical distance, and physical exercises where there is close-contact. • During physical education classes, encourage students to wear face masks as much as possible when they are not exercising. • Regarding club activities, practice matches with other schools and training camps should be temporarily restricted. • Properly incorporate staggered attendance, group schooling, online learning, or other measures into the curriculum in consideration of the students' developmental stages.
Nursery schools, certified centers for early childhood education and care, after-school centers, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urge staff members and guardians to wear face masks. It is recommended for children to wear face masks as much as possible if it is determined that they are able to wear face masks without difficulty from the perspective of their developmental status and other factors (this is a temporary measure). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Children under two years old are not recommended to wear face masks; it is required to pay extra attention to them. * Pay close attention to changes in children's physical conditions while they are wearing face masks. Children are not required to wear face masks if they are not feeling well or if it is difficult for them to wear face masks properly for an extended period of time. • Prevent the spread of infections while providing childcare by avoiding activities with a high risk of infections, dividing children into small groups, etc. • Frequently disinfect playground equipment and toys shared by children. • Avoid holding events that involve a large number of participants. Cancel or postpone events where guardians participate. • Urge children to wash their hands. Avoid seating arrangements where children are facing each other. • Proactively provide tests to childcare workers, etc., who have become close contacts so they can safely return to work as soon as possible.
Elderly facilities, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice proper measures based on the "infection prevention guidelines for nursing-care facilities" prepared by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and materials prepared by the Hyogo Prefectural Government, such as posters and checklist indicating how to prevent the spread of infections. • Strengthen management systems at elderly facilities, etc. by enhancing infection prevention measures under the instructions provided by Certified Nurses for Infection Control, such as zoning the facility. • Thoroughly monitor the health of staff members daily and make sure that they take tests frequently.
Business establishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a numerical target to reduce employee attendance through measures such as working-from-home (teleworking) even before the State of Emergency is announced. • When employees are going on business trips to areas where a surge of infections is observed, urge them to take thorough infection prevention measures, such as wearing face masks, and avoid behavior with a high risk of infections. • Business establishments providing essential services are required to review their BCPs, specify important tasks, improve systems for business continuity, and stockpile necessary supplies.