

Regarding the New COVID-19 response level categorization in response to the Omicron variant

Basis for the new categorization

- The Government has updated the COVID-19 response levels in response to the high likelihood that the Omicron variant (or a similar variant that is comparably infectious) will spread in the later half of this year and onwards, and the anticipated strain that it will cause on medical institutions. The levels have been updated with a continuing focus on the level of strain medical institutions as before, but now with new indicators and situations specifically tailored to the Omicron strain.

Basis for the new categorization in Hokkaido

- Categories, indicators and situations for each level are based on the national standard.
- The COVID-19 alert level is based on the bed occupancy rates for levels 1 and 2, and occupancy rate and bed occupancy rate by patients with severe symptoms for levels 3 and 4, along with a comprehensive evaluation of the actual situation.

Region-specific levels

- The previous level system, while setting an alert level for the entire of Hokkaido, also set a separate level for Sapporo, understanding the importance of infection prevention measures there.
- This system will remain the same.

Indicators and situations in the New level system

Category		Lull in Infections	Infections begin to spread	Increased pressure on Medical institutions	Medical institutions are unable to function sufficiently
		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Hospital bed occupancy rate	Indicator	0~30% (Bed occupancy)	30~50% (Bed occupancy)	50~80% (Bed occupancy and % of beds occupied by patients with severe symptoms)	80%~ (Bed occupancy and % of beds occupied by patients with severe symptoms)
Pressure level of medical institutions	Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low pressure for both outpatient and inpatient care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for outpatient care for patients with fevers has increased the strain on medical institutions, and COVID-19 related ambulance usage is increasing Hospital bed usage, and the number of medical personnel infected with COVID-19 are both increasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for outpatient care is overwhelming, and even patients who have a high risk of severe symptoms are unable to be treated sufficiently. Sudden increase in incidents where ambulances are not immediately available for COVID-19 patients. Hospitalized patients are increasing, and the number of medical personnel infected with COVID-19 has reached a high level where there is increasing pressure on remaining inpatient care workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outpatient care becomes overwhelmed to the point it is unmanageable, and even regular care becomes difficult. Incidents in which ambulances are requested but not available at all begin to occur. Outpatient care is totally unmanageable and ceases to function sufficiently. Inpatient numbers of patients with Moderate-Severe symptoms increases severely The above paired with high numbers of medical personnel infected with COVID-19 means that inpatient care also faced with high levels of pressure. High numbers of patients are unable to be hospitalized, and die during home/at quarantine facilities Regular medical care must be controlled and restricted
Socio-economic activity level	Situation	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of workers unable to work due to COVID-19 is increasing, and some businesses face difficulty in continuing operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of workers unable to work due to COVID-19 has increased to the point that it is difficult to continue the operation of many businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of workers unable to work due to COVID-19 is extensive to the point it presents an issue in maintaining social infrastructure.
Infection numbers	Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low number of infections, or low but steadily increasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sudden increase in infections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infection numbers have increased to the point they are causing strain on medical institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infection numbers grow enormously beyond numbers predicted for this winter.

(Compiled by Hokkaido based on national subcommittee materials and national notices)

*If the burden on the health care system increases due to the spread of infection, measures will be strengthened based on judgments regarding the actual situation in the region. (decided by the Government Headquarters on November 18, 2022).

[National framework]

- “Level 3: Period of increased pressure on medical institutions”: Make a “declaration to strengthen measures to prevent increased pressure on Medical institutions” implementing measures based on the current regional situation.
- Declare a “state of medical emergency” based on regional infection numbers when necessary to avoid Alert level 4 in cases when there is a rapid spreading of infections.