

Measures to prevent the re-spread of infection around the start of the new fiscal year- Overview

Area Hokkaido **Period** From Tuesday March 22 until Sunday, April 17, 2022

Basis To implement infection countermeasures, with the highly contagious Omicron variant in mind, to prevent the re-spread of COVID-19 during the end of the fiscal year season, when moving house, graduating, starting new jobs and other activities that increase infection risk are common.

1 Outline of Requests

Daily Life

- Avoid the 3 C's, implement basic infection countermeasures, wear nonwoven masks.
- Provide free tests (PCR, etc.) to asymptomatic Hokkaido residents who are worried about being infected.

Outings

- Avoid congested areas and other places with high infection risk
- When travelling during spring break, or moving between prefectures, avoid activities with high infection risk and follow basic infection countermeasures.

Dining out, Parties etc.

- Choose restaurants that follow infection prevention measures such as those with Hokkaido Restaurant Infection Prevention Measures Certification.
- Keep dining time short, with no heavy drinking or loud voices and wear a mask when talking. Take more thorough measures with gatherings of larger numbers, or with people you don't usually meet, and avoid large gatherings if sufficient measures can't be taken.

2 Requests for Businesses

At work

- Taking into consideration the replacement of people due to new hires, personnel changes, transfers, etc., implement thorough infection countermeasures and avoid the 3 C's
- Take necessary measures to prevent business continuity from being hindered, such as the implementation of Telework (Work from home) and staggered commuting

Eating establishments

- Observe infection control checklists and call for the thorough use of masks, especially when talking.

Nursery centers, facilities for the elderly, etc.

- Thoroughly manage the physical condition of staff and make accommodations for staff who wish to receive the booster vaccination
- At nursery centers and such like, starting with the graduation and entrance ceremonies, implement basic infection prevention measures such as staff and parents wearing masks and the diligent disinfection of play equipment.
- At facilities for the elderly, thoroughly implement measures such as wearing masks during recreation and opening windows for ventilation during transportation.

3 Requests for Schools

- Thoroughly implement infection control measures in school education activities, including events such as graduation ceremonies and entrance ceremonies, and carefully consider the implementation of activities with a high risk of infection.
- Take advantage of the spring holidays, etc. to make accommodations for staff who wish to receive the booster vaccination
- At universities, vocational schools, etc., remind students to implement infection control measures related to off-campus activities such as eating and drinking after graduation and entrance ceremonies

4 Requests regarding events

〈If an Infection Prevention Measures Safety Plan is submitted〉

- Maximum attendees: Up to capacity
- Maximum Capacity: within 100%

〈other〉

- Maximum Capacity: 5,000 people, or 50% of capacity, whichever is larger
- Maximum Attendees:
[within 50%] Cheering / Loud voices
[within 100%] No Cheering / Loud voices

Measures to prevent the re-spread of infection around the start of the new fiscal year

April 17, 2022

Hokkaido

Measures to prevent re-spread of infection

Around the beginning of the fiscal year, the risk of infection will increase due to the movement of people and social dining events associated with employment, graduation, and enrollment into higher education. With this in consideration, and keeping in mind the characteristics of the highly infectious Omicron strain, we need to thoroughly implement infection control measures.

We will continue to carefully monitor the infection status, etc., improve the medical care provision system and promote vaccination, and if infection spreads again, we will be flexible in considering necessary measures.

Findings on the characteristics of Omicron strains

76th (March 15, 2022)

New Coronavirus Infectious Disease Control Advisory Board

[Infectiousness /Transmissibility]

Compared to the Delta strain, the Omicron strain has a shorter generation time of about 2 days (about 5 days for the Delta strain), a shorter doubling time and incubation period, and has a higher risk of reinfection and secondary infection after infection. It has been confirmed that the infection spread is also very fast.

[Infection sites / transmission route]

In Japan, many infections occur in the same situations as before (indoor spaces with insufficient ventilation, when eating and drinking, etc.), and the infection route is also believed to be the same as before through inhalation of droplets and aerosols, contact infection, etc.

[Severity]

It has been shown that infection from the Omicron strain may have a relatively lower risk of hospitalization and aggravation and severe COVID-19 symptoms than the Delta strain. However, the case fatality rate of infection with the Omicron strain analyzed at this time is considered to be higher than that of seasonal influenza.

[Vaccine effectiveness]

The effectiveness of the initial immunization in preventing the onset of infection from the Omicron strain is significantly reduced. The effectiveness of preventing hospitalization is maintained to a certain extent for half a year, but then decreases to 50% or less. On the other hand, it has been reported overseas that the booster vaccination restores the effectiveness of preventing the onset of infection and hospitalization from the Omicron strain. However, there have also been reports of a reduction in vaccine effectiveness after the booster shot.

[BA.2 Strain]

Currently, the shift to the BA.2 strain is progressing. In the future, it may affect the rate of increase (decrease) of the number of infections. Note that from the analysis of the effective reproduction number and the risk of secondary infection, the BA.2 strain was found to be more infectious in comparison with the BA.1 strain.

Target Area

All of Hokkaido

Period

Tuesday, March 22 ~ Sunday, April 17, 2022

【Requests for Residents of and Visitors to Hokkaido ①】

Request

(During everyday life)

◆ Implement basic infection prevention strategies such as avoiding the 3 C's, ensuring social distancing, wearing a mask*, frequent disinfection of your hands and fingers, and securing sufficient ventilation. (24(9))

*The use of a non-woven mask is recommended

◆ If you have a fever or other symptoms, refrain from outings and either visit your family doctor / GP, or a testing site. (24(9))

◆ If you do not have symptoms, but you are worried you may have contracted COVID-19, regardless of your vaccine status, take a test. (24(9))

(Specific requests regarding outings)

◆ Do not travel to or visit crowded places, or other areas that have a high risk of infection. (24(9))

◆ Pay special care to thorough infection prevention measures when meeting people you do not often meet, or people who have a high risk of developing severe symptoms. (24(9))

◆ When traveling between prefectures during the spring break etc., implement thorough infection prevention measures and refrain from activities with a high risk of infection at your destination (24(9))

【Requests for Residents of and Visitors to Hokkaido ②】

Requests

(Especially at welcome and farewell parties, etc.)

- ◆ Choose restaurants etc. with official Hokkaido Restaurant Infection Prevention Measures Certification, and refrain from dining at establishments that do not have sufficient infection countermeasures. (24(9))
- ◆ Please comply with infection countermeasures and rules set up by restaurants, bars etc. (24(9))
- ◆ When dining, do so for a short period of time, no loud voices, no heavy drinking, and wear a mask when talking. Please pay special attention to implementing these measures when you are gathering in large groups or with people you do not meet often (24(9))

【Call for cooperation for those considering visiting Hokkaido】

Cooperation request

- ◆ When traveling to Hokkaido, thoroughly implement basic infection prevention measures and refrain from activities with a high risk of infection at your destination. Refrain from visiting Hokkaido if you show symptoms of infection, such as a fever. (call for cooperation)

【Requests for Business owners①】

(at the Workplace)

- ◆ Comply with industry-specific guidelines (24(9))
- ◆ Taking into consideration the replacement of people due to new hires, personnel changes, transfers, etc., implement thorough infection countermeasures and avoid the 3 C's. Pay particular attention to changing locations (break room, changing room, smoking room etc.) (request for cooperation)
- ◆ Take measures to promote efforts to reduce contact between people, such as the implementation of Telework (Work from home), staggered commuting, etc. (Call for cooperation)
- ◆ Review and implement a business continuity plan (BCP) in order to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on your business, and ensure swift recovery and re-opening as required. (Call for cooperation)

(at Restaurants)

- ◆ Strictly follow the guidelines listed in the infection prevention measures checklist. Specifically, ensure that mask usage is properly enforced during conversation. (24(9))
- ◆ Work to receive Hokkaido Restaurant Infection Measure Verification status (also called 3rd party verification) for your restaurant (Call for co-operation)

Requests /
Calls for
Cooperation

【 Requests for Business owners ② 】

Request Outline

(Preschools/Nurseries, Certified centers for early childhood education and care, Elderly Care Facilities, etc.)

- ◆ Implement strict health management policies, and ensure that staff can take leave if they have symptoms such as a fever, etc. Additionally, ensure that provisions are made to allow staff to take vaccine booster shots if they wish to do so. (24(9))
- ◆ Ensure mask usage of staff and guardians, frequent sterilization of play equipment and other basic infection countermeasures based on the “Infection prevention measures guidebook for Nurseries”, especially during Graduation and Entrance ceremonies. (24(9))
- ◆ Enforce mask usage and infection countermeasures such as opening windows for ventilation, mask usage during recreation time, and encouraging online meetings with family rather than face-to-face, based on measures outlined in the “Infection countermeasures handbook for care facilities” (24(9))

【Requests for Educational Institutions】

Request Outline

- ◆ Thorough implementation of infection countermeasures at schools and school dormitories, based on the hygiene management manual. (24(9))
- ◆ Keep track of the infection status of all students and family members, etc. living in the same household, and take measures such as prompt and wide ranging closures (all school, grade, class depending on spread of infection) as necessary. In case of closure, ensure that students still engage in online learning, etc. and that those students who are unable to stay home have a place to go. (24(9))
- ◆ Carefully consider and evaluate activities with a high risk of infection (Those requiring overnight stays as a group, e.g. Field trips, Classes requiring overnight stays, etc.), and ensure that such activities are only carried out with the permission and understanding of parents and guardians of the students. However, school trips should not go to other prefectures that are currently under a state of emergency or implementing quasi-emergency measures. (24(9))
- ◆ Club activities should be carefully conducted, with time, amount of people, and location, etc. being taken into consideration. Activities in which infection countermeasures cannot be sufficiently followed must be cancelled. Multiple health checks should be implemented, and a school-wide guidance system for infection disease control should be established. Moreover, practice games or training camps organized with other schools should be suspended. (24(9))
- ◆ Implement strict health management policies, and ensure that staff can take leave if they have symptoms such as a fever, etc. Additionally, ensure that provisions are made during the spring break to allow staff to take vaccine booster shots if they wish to do so. (24(9))
- ◆ Universities, vocational schools, etc., should avoid crowding by utilizing online lessons and implementing lessons in which students are divided into smaller classes. Additionally, there should be thorough warning and explanation regarding the implementation of infection prevention measures for extracurricular activities (24(9))

【Requests regarding events】

Maximum Capacity /Attendees*

- Maximum Attendees※1

5,000 people, or 50% of maximum capacity, whichever is larger

24(9) Special Measures Law

- Maximum Capacity※1

[Within 100%] No Cheering/Loud Voices

(Appropriate distance between patrons if no seating provided)

[Within 50%] Cheering/Loud Voices ※2 (Appropriate distance between patrons if no seating provided)

〈 If an Infection Prevention Measures Safety Plan is submitted*3 〉

- Maximum attendees

100% Capacity

- Maximum attendees

Within 100%

※Please refer to the Hokkaido Government website for more information on event restrictions and guidelines

*1 The lowest value of either capacity or attendees is considered the legal limit for event capacity. However, both requirements must be fulfilled.

*2 Cheering/Loud voices refers to “the attendees of the event repeatedly or continually speak or shout, etc. at a volume higher than normal” and such activity is actively encouraged or necessary infection prevention measures are not sufficiently implemented.

*3 An “Infection Prevention Measures Safety Plan” refers to a plan which details the specific strategies and measures that will be implemented in order to ensure effective infection prevention measures during the event. This document must be submitted 2 weeks before the event is held.

Hosts

◆ Observe industry-specific guidelines when holding events. (24(9))

◆ Ensure thorough implementation of infection tracking measures, such as COCOA, guest lists, etc. (24(9))

Participants

◆ Follow basic infection countermeasures before and after events (Call for cooperation)

【Public Facilities】

Public Facilities

◆ Public facilities will adjust infection prevention measures, and take action accordingly with industry specific guidelines and the infection situation of the local area.