

Request to All Citizens and Businesses in Saitama Prefecture

February 16, 2023

Saitama Prefecture is revising its guidelines for mask-wearing in accordance with changes to the national government's policy made on February 10, 2023. In order to prevent further spread of infection and to work towards the coexistence of infection-prevention measures and socioeconomic activities, we humbly ask for your cooperation regarding the following requests. The revised guidelines will go into effect on March 13, 2023.

1 Requests for Citizens

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

Requests based on the Act on Infectious Diseases Article 44-3, Paragraph 2

○ Request for registering positive cases and health monitoring

If you are diagnosed as positive for the new coronavirus at a medical institution or testing center, please register with the "COVID-positive registration service", and report your health condition to "My HER-SYS" (the self-registration system for infected persons)

If any of the following apply to you, registration will be completed by the medical institution, so self-registration is not required.

- ① Patients 65 years or older on the date of examination
- ② Patients requiring hospitalization as determined by the doctor
- ③ Persons at risk of becoming seriously ill, and,
patients requiring medication for the new coronavirus
Or, since contracting the virus, patients requiring oxygen as determined by the doctor
- ④ Patients who are pregnant

If any of the above 1-4 apply to you and you were reported as positive by the medical institution, please report your health condition to "My HER-SYS" (the self-registration system for infected persons).

Other requests

○ 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*¹, 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. When shopping, go with the smallest number of people necessary.

*¹ See attachment for details.

○ 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

○ Consideration for Medical Institutions

- If you are at low risk of developing severe illness, please make use of online diagnosis confirmation services 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.

○ Adherence to Infection Prevention Measures after Isolation Period

- For patients with symptoms of coronavirus, you can end your isolation period on the 8th day (7 days after the onset of symptoms, and 24 hours after symptoms have disappeared).
- Asymptomatic patients can end their isolation period on the 8th day (7 days after sample collection). If you test negative on the 5th day with a qualitative antigen test, you can end your isolation on the 6th day.
- However, you cannot end your isolation period if you do not meet the requirements set by your doctor.
- As you may still be infectious for 10 days (7 days for asymptomatic patients), please strictly adhere to infection-prevention measures.
 - Continue to monitor your body temperature and health
 - Avoid close contact with persons at high risk, such as the elderly
 - Avoid visiting high-risk facilities and places with high risk of infection
 - Avoid eating with others
 - Wear a mask

2 Requests for Businesses (including facility managerial staff)

(1) Requests for All Businesses

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

○ 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.

Other requests

- 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.

(2) Requests for 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.

(3) Requests for 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.

(4) Requests for Dining and Drinking Facilities

- Please use and adhere to the Sai-no-Kuni “New Lifestyle” Safety Declaration
- If your facility is not Sai-no-Kuni “New Lifestyle” Safety Declaration Plus-certified, please apply as soon as possible.

Facilities that are not certified should reduce operating hours to be between 5 a.m. and 8 p.m., and should not serve alcohol.

(5) Requests for Retail and other Crowded Indoor Facilities

Facilities*² stipulated in the Act on Special Measures, Article 11, Paragraph 1 should adhere to the following:

- Implement measures to prevent overcrowding
- Enforce mask-wearing policies for customers (ends March 12, 2023)

- *2
- Theaters, stadiums, movie theaters, entertainment halls, etc. (No. 4)
 - Meeting spaces, public halls, etc. (No. 5)
 - Exhibition halls (No. 6)

- Retail stores (Except for stores selling essential products as designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, such as food, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, other hygiene products, regenerative medicine products, and fuel) (No. 7)
 - E.g. large-scale retail stores, shopping malls, department stores, electronics retail stores, etc.
- Hotels, inns, etc. (Only in meeting spaces) (No. 8)
- Workout facilities, amusement centers, etc. (No. 9)
- Museums, art galleries, etc. (No. 10)
- Amusement facilities (Except for those licensed to operate under the Food Sanitation Act) (No. 11)
- Facilities operating in the service industry (Except for essential services) (No. 12)

Regarding the Wearing of Masks

On February 10, 2023, the national government's novel coronavirus taskforce revised its guidelines regarding the wearing of masks and general infection prevention measures.

To reflect this change, Saitama Prefecture will also be revising its guidelines regarding the wearing of masks from March 13, 2023, as follows.

- In general, the decision to wear a mask will be left up to the individual. However, businesses can implement mask-wearing policies for customers or staff on the basis of coronavirus infection prevention or business operation reasons.
- To prevent infection in older and high-risk persons, mask wearing is recommended in the following settings:
 - During medical examinations
 - When visiting hospitals and residential medical facilities with many older and high-risk patients or aged-care facilities, etc.
 - Riding the train and bus* during crowded times such as rush hour (same as current)
*Except on services where generally all passengers can be seated (e.g. bullet trains, commuter train services, highway buses, charter buses, etc.)
- Persons at high risk of serious illness should wear a mask when going to crowded places when coronavirus is prevalent
- Persons with symptoms, persons who have tested positive for coronavirus, and households with someone who has tested positive, should refrain from going out. If you must leave home for essential reasons such as visiting the doctor, avoid crowds and wear a mask.
- Mask-wearing is recommended for staff when working at hospitals and residential medical facilities with many older and high-risk patients or aged-care facilities
- If the number of cases of infection drastically increases, it is possible that strengthened infection prevention measures, including mask-wearing, will be temporarily implemented again. In this case, guardians and other adults should pay close attention to the health of the children around them, as there are concerns regarding the health effects of children wearing masks.