

A Request from Shimane Prefecture

(State of infections at the end of 2020)

The effects of the nationwide spread of COVID-19 since November have spread to Shimane Prefecture; from late November to late December, the number of infected people increased in the prefecture, with 61 confirmed infections in December.

Under such circumstances, we were concerned about an increase in infections from people returning home to Shimane during the New Year's holidays. Therefore, we asked those planning on returning to Shimane to carefully reconsider their travel plans, and asked families who hosted visitors to refrain from dining with non-family members for a set period of time.

(State of infections at the start of 2021)

Two weeks have passed since the long weekend of January 9th, and the number of infections in January as of today is 45 cases. For now, we appreciate that Shimane has avoided a worse state of infections than in December due to people visiting the prefecture.

I am deeply grateful to all citizens for your sincere cooperation in following our many painful requests.

(Self-restraint in the use of food and drink establishments)

At the same time, the increase in the number of infections since late November, and the state of emergency since January 7th in 4 prefectures—which emphasized shortened hours for food and drink establishments—has influenced the awareness and behavior of citizens in Shimane. Even in Shimane Prefecture where infections are being successfully limited, there is a strong tendency to avoid food and drink establishments.

As a result, many food and drink establishments, along with related businesses, are reporting that business is immensely suffering—we believe that businesses in Shimane are being impacted as much as those in areas subject to the state of emergency.

(Analysis of the cause of infections)

Looking at infections in Shimane since November, most are related to contact with infected individuals from outside the prefecture. Currently, we have not identified any infections due to dining among citizens who have not had contact with people from outside Shimane.

Therefore, if residents who have no contact with people from outside Shimane dine together, it is unlikely that such gatherings will cause a spread of infections.

(How to use food and drink establishments)

In light of this situation, we believe that infections will not spread as long as residents thoroughly follow certain precautions when visiting food and drink establishments.

Until now, Shimane Prefecture has asked citizens to beware of “5 situations” with a high risk of infection, such as dining with large groups of people or for a long period of time. However, we had not provided specific numbers for such guidelines.

Therefore, for the time being, please dine in groups of 9 people or fewer.

However, please refrain from participating for two weeks if you have dined with someone from outside Shimane, or you have stayed at the home of someone from outside Shimane.

Please limit the time spent dining to 1 hour 30 minutes.

We will review these guidelines as appropriate, depending on the future state of infections.

Tottori Prefecture, as well as areas of Hiroshima and Yamaguchi Prefectures where citizens of Shimane Prefecture usually visit for daily necessities (e.g. work, shopping, etc.) shall be treated the same as areas within Shimane Prefecture.

(Thorough practice of infection prevention measures at food and drink establishments)

So that citizens of Shimane may dine out with peace of mind, I once again urge all food and drink establishments to check the “Infection Prevention Guidelines” and to thoroughly implement infection prevention measures.

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Maruyama Tatsuya
Governor of Shimane Prefecture