

## To Prevent the Spread of New Coronavirus Infections Oshu City Mayor

The number of new coronavirus infections continues to increase nationwide with the 8<sup>th</sup> wave.

Within the jurisdiction of the Oshu Public Health Center, the number of new infections in a single day reached a record high of 284 on December 20, with clusters occurring at multiple facilities for the elderly.

Medical institutions in the prefecture have been forced to restrict general medical care, such as suspending the admission of inpatients and postponing less urgent surgeries, due to an increase in the number of patients and a series of absences from medical staff due to infections, etc. The reality is that we are in a situation where lives that can be saved cannot be saved. It has been recognized that we are at the equivalent of level 4 (medical dysfunction) according to prefectural standards, especially in the southern part of the prefecture.

Furthermore, on December 14, the prefecture reported that the flu season had begun for the first time in three years, raising concerns about a simultaneous epidemic.

As we approach the year-end and New Year holidays, we will have more opportunities to come into contact with people we do not normally meet, such as at dinners, homecomings, and on trips. In order to avoid further strain on the medical system, all citizens are requested to thoroughly implement basic infection control measures such as wearing appropriate masks, washing hands, and ensuring adequate ventilation even in cold weather. In addition, I would ask for your cooperation in the following three points.

First, we ask that those who are at low risk of becoming seriously ill and have mild symptoms perform self-examinations, take over-the-counter medicines, and recuperate at home in order to prevent a

convergence of examinations and consultations at medical institutions.

Second, please stock up on over-the-counter medicines such as antigen test kits and antipyretics, as well as groceries and daily necessities for about a week in preparation for infection.

Third, if you feel unwell and need to visit a medical institution, please call in advance and try to see a doctor during the daytime on weekdays as much as possible.

During the year-end and New Year holidays, many clinics are closed, and pharmacies are expected to operate to a limited extent.

In order to prevent patients from converging on medical institutions, the city will provide a drive-through system in the parking lot of the Esashi General Branch Office for those with symptoms such as fever to provide free test kits from December 29 to January 3. If you have symptoms such as a sudden fever during the year-end and New Year holidays, please take measures based on the flow chart named “What if you think you might have been infected with the coronavirus during the year-end and New Year holidays?”

The city is performing vaccinations against the BA.5 strain. We would like to ask not only the elderly who are at high risk of developing severe symptoms, but also young people who have refrained from getting vaccinated, to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

In addition, we continue to provide vaccinations to infants (6 months to 4 years old) and children (5 to 11 years old), so please consider getting them vaccinated.

21 December 2022

Jun KURANARI, Mayor, Oshu City