

**A Message from the Mayor of Izumo City Concerning COVID-19.**  
**~Preparing for the Next Stage~**

To the people of Izumo City,

The Government has announced that, on May 8, COVID-19 will be reclassified from a Category 2 to a Category 5 infectious disease. In advance of that, from March 13 onward, the decision to wear a mask will come down to individual judgement, along with other changes to the Basic Action Policy.

That being said, in order to prevent high-risk individuals from contracting the virus, such as the elderly and those with preexisting conditions, it is advised that we all continue to wear masks when attending medical facilities, visiting facilities for the elderly, riding busy trains and buses, and so on.

Moving forward to the next stage in preventing the spread of COVID-19, it will be up to individual discretion whether or not to wear a mask depending on the situation.

At Izumo City Hall, from March 13 onwards, while attending the service counter and in other situations where staff have opportunities to speak directly to residents, we have decided that employees will continue to wear masks during working hours for the time being. Starting with city hall, we will no longer request visitors to wear masks on the premises in principle; however, you may still be asked to wear one depending on the current state of COVID-19 infections. I imagine that you may also be asked to wear a mask if you are attending any events or seminars hosted by City Hall.

Currently, there is a drop in COVID-19 infection numbers nationally; however, that does not mean that the risk of COVID-19 infection has disappeared entirely. With spring break and the new financial year right around the corner, there is a chance that the number of cases will rise again.

As ever, taking care of your physical health, washing and disinfecting your hands when you return to your home, ventilating indoor spaces, and other such basic preventative measures should still be practiced.

I would like to thank everyone for their continued understanding and cooperation.

March 10, 2023

Mayor of Izumo City, Toshiyuki Iitsuka