

**A Message from the Mayor of Izumo City Concerning COVID-19  
Moving Forward in COVID-19's Reclassification as a Cat. 5 Disease**

To the people of Izumo City,

I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your participation in daily infection prevention measures and increased engagement in vaccination against COVID-19.

From May 8 onwards, COVID-19's legal classification will be changed from a Category 2 to Category 5. This reclassification will mark a major shift from the previous system of anti-infection measures which made various requests of citizens founded on Government guidance to a new system based on voluntary action and valuing individual freedom of choice. This process actually started on March 13, when it was announced that the wearing of masks would be left to personal judgement. As opportunities for travel and leisure increase across the county, we can feel society gradually changing.

In Izumo, as elsewhere, events that were not possible due to the risk of infection have more-or-less returned as normal, and I imagine that there are many who want to see lots of people come to their events to enjoy themselves and enjoy the sort of prosperity we saw before the pandemic. Furthermore, Golden Week is starting this weekend, and it is predicted that Izumo will see a large number of visitors. With the return of tourists, we expect a boost for hospitality, retail, restaurants, and other industries.

The desire to see these economic benefits, and increased consumer spending continue is exactly why it is more important than ever to remain vigilant, and to maintain procedures to prevent infection to avoid another rise in cases.

Regarding vaccination, individuals over 65 and others will be eligible to receive the Spring Vaccine from May 8 and the Autumn Vaccine from September of this year, so please consider proactively getting this vaccine. Thank you for shopping and eating within the city, protecting our positive economic cycle. Thank you also, as ever, for continuing to practice basic infection prevention measures in your daily lives by taking care of your physical health, washing your hands when you get home, ventilating enclosed spaces, and so on.

Let's continue strive towards an Izumo City that is abundant in smiles and vigor together.

April 28, 2023

Mayor of Izumo City, Toshiyuki Iitsuka