

Additional disease control and healthcare measures in preparation for COVID-19 resurgence

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PRESS RELEASE

On July 13, the government formulated and announced updated disease control and healthcare measures in preparation for a resurgence of COVID-19 waves in the summer season due to the spread of a new Omicron subvariant known as BA.5, fading of prior infection- and vaccine-induced immunity, and removal of social distancing protocols.

Recently, the possibility has emerged that the COVID-19 surge will reach its peak faster than previously predicted and the number of daily confirmed cases will hit record highs, depending on how quickly the BA.5 Omicron subvariant spreads.

In response to the COVID-19 outlook incorporating these recent developments, the government has been solidifying and enhancing the nation's disease control and healthcare capacity in preparation for a situation in which the number of daily new confirmed cases reaches around 300,000 in the near future.

1. Disease Control Measures

The government will seek to purchase 942,000 treatment doses within July to supply 342,000 doses in the second half this year and 600,000 doses in the first half of next year.

Temporary screening stations will be installed in stages to ensure easy access for citizens and operated for longer hours on weekends and holidays, coupled with existing screening clinics.

Dedicated response teams will be managed by local governments to more effectively focus the response efforts on infection-vulnerable facilities.

Public health protocols will be toughened for high-risk groups and a climate in which citizens are encouraged to practice voluntary social distancing will be created.

2. Healthcare Measures

The number of one-stop medical institutions that can provide testing, medical evaluation, and prescription treatment will be increased to 10,000 by the end of July.

The fast-track procedure available for high-risk groups will also include patients with underlying medical conditions.

*(As-Is) People aged 60 or older, immunocompromised patients, patients in nursing hospitals/facilities → (To-Be) Patients with underlying medical conditions, in mental hospitals/facilities, or in facilities for disabled people

Screening clinics at public health centers will be operated for longer hours during weekdays and remain open even on weekends and holidays from July 20.

*(As-Is) Open during business hours on weekdays → (To-Be) Open nights and weekends as well starting from July 20

In the first phase, an administrative order will be issued to prepare over 1,400 beds nationwide to be available in stages.

* Estimated to secure over 4,000 beds for critically ill patients in preparation for a situation in which the number of daily new cases reaches 300,000.

The preemptive testing of workers at infection-vulnerable facilities will be strengthened, and restrictions on visits, going out, and staying overnight will be implemented early (starting from Jul. 25).

All convenience stores will be allowed to sell COVID-19 home test kits starting from July 20.

* (As-Is) Sold at 23,000 convenience stores → (To-Be from Jul. 20-Sept. 30) Sold at 48,000 convenience stores.

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