



# HELLO OKAYA

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This newsletter is distributed four times a year by the Okaya International Exchange Association, with the aim of providing local foreign residents with information necessary for daily life, as well as insight into aspects of Japanese culture. Please feel free to contact us with your feedback or any questions you may have.

## H1N1 Flu

Japan confirmed its first domestic case of infection with the H1N1 strain of Influenza-A virus on May 16, 2009.

The H1N1 strain, locally known as the new strain of the influenza virus, is a flu virus causing illness in people. It was called as such because once it gets inside a human host, it can multiply and mutate into a different strain that can be easily transmitted from person to person. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare classified the confirmed "swine flu (H1N1)" outbreak in Mexico and the U.S. as a highly contagious new strain of influenza based on the Infectious Disease Law.

The symptoms include sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, cough, headache and chills accompanying fever. In addition to these common cold-like symptoms, muscle and joint pains, eye pain, stomachache, diarrhea and a wide array of conditions may also be reported. Fever may usually last for 5 days. Recently, it has also come to attention that H1N1 complications can lead to encephalitis and brain disease. Further complications may result to convulsions, mental disorder or even death.

The symptoms for both the regular flu and the H1N1 type are so similar that it is very difficult to tell them apart, thus the need for a PCR procedure (a DNA test), which can establish an accurate diagnosis of the sickness.

Like the seasonal flu, the potency of the H1N1 virus in one person can infect 3 to 4 people. In Japan, it was reported that many of the confirmed H1N1 flu cases are young people. When the virus is passed from one person to another, it can possibly mutate into a stronger type. The outbreak in the Kansai region has caused suspension of classes in many schools and a number of preventive measures have been observed. Although it is possible that the summer season can bring an end to this outbreak, we still cannot disregard the possibility that the infection may continue until autumn or wintertime. Although Tamiflu is effective in treating patients, and that Japan has ample supply of this medication, drug manufacturers are still in the process of developing a vaccine for the H1N1 strain.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember is prevention. If ever such a massive outbreak occurs, it will be best to avoid crowded places. Make efforts to wash your hands, wear a mask and gargle frequently. Get enough sleep, eat properly and if needed, take Vitamin C as a precaution. For parents, be aware that your children can be very susceptible to the virus. Remind them to always wash their hands and gargle whenever they are in school or at home. If you experience fever above 38°C, please call the Suwa Insurance and Welfare Office (Tel. 0266-57-2930) or the Nagano Pref. Suwa Regional Office (Tel. 0266-53-6000).

We also encourage all the Okaya City residents to remain calm and stay informed by getting the right facts from reliable sources.

**Okaya City Counseling Service - Health Promotion Division (Tel. 0266-23-4811)**

### ☆Typical Japanese ~Let's learn and enjoy Japanese food culture~

#### Sake (rice wine)

Brewed with rice and water, this has been a Japanese alcoholic beverage since ancient times. Because it can be drunk warmed up, intoxication comes on more quickly and in winter it warms the body. When drunk cold, good sake has a taste similar to fine quality wine. As a result, there are some kinds of sake that have won prizes when submitted for exhibition at European wine competitions. Some kinds of sake are mass-produced and sold throughout Japan. However there are local sake breweries in every region across the country, which make their respective characteristic tastes based on the quality of rice and water and differences in brewing processes. This is called "jizake" (locally brewed sake) and has played the main role in the recent sake boom. With the alcohol concentration at around 15%, it is comparatively easy to drink, resulting in increasing numbers of female fans.



#### Soy Sauce

Soy sauce is a unique Japanese condiment made from soy beans. The English word "soy" derives from the word shoyu. This outstanding condiment, a brown liquid with a peculiar smell, is essential for most Japanese cooking. Accordingly, one can say that it constitutes the basis of Japanese people's sense of taste. Without soy sauce, the Japanese can't eat sukiyaki, sushi or sashimi or even season any of their cooking. Soy sauce recently has sold well in the U.S. and other Western countries and has been used as seasoning for steak and other foods. "Teriyaki steak" is grilled with a sauce based on soy sauce.



#### Soy bean paste (Miso)

Like soy sauce, miso is made from soy beans. It is a paste-like condiment mostly in brown color. Many Japanese have miso soup for breakfast. The hot soup is made by adding several ingredients to broth, for example, tofu, seaweed, or vegetables, then stirring in the soy bean



paste. In addition to soup, it is used as seasoning for ramen (a Chinese brand of noodle), rice balls, and all kinds of cookpot dishes. Fish or meat pickled in this miso keep for a long time and yet with enhanced taste.

Soy bean paste is also an important condiment that is indispensable to the Japanese people. Recently, miso soup in particular has been valued as a health food that contributes to a balanced diet.

# A message from Okaya City

The Okaya International Exchange Association (OIEA) at the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Okaya City Hall can help you fill out the following forms below. (For Portuguese speakers, please come on Wednesdays from 9:30AM to 3:30PM.)



## ★Have you already applied for the Cash Handout?★

As a local economic countermeasure and livelihood support for citizens in response to the economic recession, Okaya City is handing out stimulus cash packages to registered residents.

In order to receive the cash handout, it is necessary to submit the prescribed application form, which was sent by post to all heads of the household on March 16, 2009. The City Planning Division located at the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of the City Hall will receive all applications until September 18, 2009. Residents who have yet to apply for this benefit are asked to submit their forms as soon as possible.

### ◇ Eligibility

1. Eligible residents should fall under (1) or (2) as of base date, February 1, 2009.

(1) Japanese citizens who are registered residents of Okaya City.

(2) Foreign citizens who are registered residents of Okaya City. (Illegal residents and temporary visitors are not eligible.)

2. Only the head of the households of eligible residents are authorized to apply for the package. (With the exception of foreign residents who are authorized to apply for their stimulus package individually)

### ◇ Stimulus Package Amount

12,000 yen per eligible resident (However people who are 65 years and above or 18 years and below will be given 20,000 yen)

### ◇ Applying for and claiming your stimulus package

As a rule, there are two possible methods you can follow:

[Apply by post] Fill out the bank transfer forms completely, and send it together with a copy of your identification card to the City Hall. The city will then wire the amount to your bank account.

[Apply in person] Fill out the bank transfer forms completely, and bring it with you to the city hall. The city will then wire the amount to your bank account. ※For exceptional cases, like people without a bank account, the form of payment will be in cash.

※**Deadline for application is September 18, 2009.**

### Cash Handout Payment Flow

(1) The Cash Handout Application form will be sent by post to the head of the family of registered Okaya City residents (as of February 1, 2009).

(2) Fill out the required fields in the forms (that you have received) and prepare a copy of your alien registration card and (for bank transfer purposes) a copy of your bank book or atm card showing the bank name, account number, and your account name.

(3) Send the completely filled out forms together with the required documents by post, or bring it directly to the City Hall in person to apply for the cash handout.

(4) Receive the cash handout after it has been transferred to your bank account.

◇ For Inquiries: Contact the City Planning Department (Tel. 0266-23-4811)

## ★Have you already applied for the Child-rearing Special Support Allowance?★



In mid-March of this year, the city sent the child-rearing special support allowance application forms to the heads of all eligible households. The special allowance has already been sent to individual bank accounts for applications submitted and verified on or before March 31<sup>st</sup>. We encourage those who have yet to file their claim to submit their application as soon as possible.

### ◇ Eligibility

As of base date, February 1, 2009, head of the families with eligible children who falls under 1 or 2:

1. Those who are registered on the Basic Resident Register of Okaya City.

2. Registered foreign residents of Okaya City (Illegal immigrants and short-term residents are not eligible.)

### ◇ Children who are eligible for the benefit

Second child (and succeeding ones) born between April 2, 2002 and April 1, 2005

※Second child is defined as the succeeding child after the first one who was born not earlier than April 2, 1990.

◇ Amount to be received: 36,000 yen per eligible child

◇ How to apply

You can either apply by post (using the enclosed return envelope) or directly submit your application to the city hall. Furnish a copy of your identification card and a copy of your bank book (showing your name and account details).

◇ Where and what time to submit your application

• Child Affairs Division, 2F Okaya City Hall and each City Branch Office (Minato, Kawagishi, Osachi)

Accepting applications from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays)

• Okaya City Satellite Office in front of Okaya Station (Ground Floor, Lala Okaya) accepts application from 10:00 am to 7:00 p.m. (excluding 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month)

◇ Application Period: Until September 18, 2009 (Friday)

◇ Others

• Heads of the household living separately from the eligible children and the first child (i.e. the children are not registered in Okaya City) will not receive the application form. Please inform the city hall if this is your situation. If this is the case, the condition is for the eligible child to be supported by the same person.

• Bank transfer to Japan Post Bank will take a longer processing time than other banks.

◇ For Inquiries: Contact the Board of Education / Child Affairs Division (Tel. 0266-23-4811)

## ★ Know the rules on proper garbage disposal ★

In Okaya City, garbage needs to be separated into:

■ *burnable*

■ *non-burnable and aluminum cans, tin cans and metal*

■ *glass bottles, returnable bottles (beer bottles, liquor bottles etc.)*

■ *waste paper/used cloth/pet bottles/styrofoam trays*

■ *batteries*

■ *fluorescent lights/light bulbs*

before it is collected. Let's remember to follow the rules when throwing away our garbage.

Items that cannot be processed at the sanitation plant → 4 recyclable electronic appliances (TV sets / refrigerators (including freezers) / washing machines / air-conditioning units)



◇ Basic Rule of Garbage Disposal

• Please take out your garbage by 8:30 a.m. on collection days. **Do not take it out the night before or after 8:30 a.m.**

• Use only Okaya City-designated garbage bags (for burnable and non-burnable). **Do not use non-designated garbage bags.**

• Please write your name (first name and surname) on the garbage bag. Remember that you are responsible for your own garbage.

• Take out your garbage to your district's designated disposal area.

◇ Items that can be processed if taken directly to the Sanitation Plant

■ *Futon etc.*

Cotton futon, carpet, stuffed toys, mattress (remove any spring), electric blanket and electric carpet (remove electrical cords)

■ *Large amount of trash (when moving houses etc.)*

Place in the designated garbage bags and bring directly to the Sanitation plant

■ *Grass clippings and branches*

• Break up small branches with diameters exceeding 10 cm. and cut into 60 cm-length or shorter, then tie up into bundles. Let it dry up before placing into designated bags.

• Cut logs/big branches into 17 cm-thick (or smaller) and 180 cm-length (or shorter) and tie in bundles small enough to carry, then bring directly to the Sanitation plant. ✕ Plants with thorns, bamboo, tree roots, poisonous or sick plants cannot be recycled.

■ *Wooden furniture*

• Chest drawers, bookshelves, desks, sideboards and others: Remove any non-burnable or metal fixings and reduce down to boards of 60-cm length (or shorter). Tie with rope.

■ *Dead animals*

• (There is a fee for dogs, cats and other small animals.) Large or special pets may be refused. Put in a plastic bag and tie the opening. Place in a cardboard box and seal with duct tape.

### [Sanitation Plant Operating Hours]

Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Saturday 8:30 a.m. to Noon

Happy Monday\* 8:30 a.m. to Noon (Happy Monday Refers to the following holidays: Marine Day, Respect for the Aged Day, National Sports Day and Coming-of-Age Day)

Drop off your garbage during operating hours and pay any required fees.

### [Closed]

Sundays/Public Holidays (Excluding Happy Mondays)

August 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>

Year-end and New year holidays

◇F.A.Q.

Q. How do you dispose of mobile phone units?

A. Bring the unit to the mobile phone shop. Do not throw it away with your non-burnable garbage.



◇Check the schedule for garbage collection (Period: April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010)

Each residential district has its own fixed schedule for garbage collection.

Let's do our share in reducing the amount of garbage in our community.

★Special Days when garbage are not collected from designated locations

○Sundays, Holidays (however, garbage will be collected on the following holidays:)

- Marine Day (3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of July) • Respect for the Aged Day (3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of September)
- Health & Sports Day (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of October) • Coming of Age Day (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of January)

○August 15 to 16 ○December 29 to January 3

Burnable garbage			
Days	Mon/Thu	Tue/Fri	Wed/Sat
District	間下 小尾口 小口 東堀 中屋 中村 横川	下浜 上浜 新屋敷 小井川 西堀	今井 岡谷 小坂 花岡 三沢 新倉 駒沢 鮎沢 橋原

Non-burnable garbage					
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1 <sup>st</sup> Week	下浜 小尾口 新屋敷	間下 小口	中屋 中村 横川	上浜 西堀	三沢 新倉
2 <sup>nd</sup> Week	岡谷	今井	東堀	小井川	小坂 花岡 駒沢 鮎沢 橋原
※No collection on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> week					

Aluminum Cans, Tin Cans, Metals					
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week	下浜 小尾口 新屋敷	間下 小口	中屋 中村 横川	上浜 西堀	三沢 新倉
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Week	岡谷	今井	東堀	小井川	小坂 花岡 駒沢 鮎沢 橋原
※No collection on the 5 <sup>th</sup> week					

Glass bottles, Returnable bottles					
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week	岡谷	今井	東堀	小井川	小坂 花岡 駒沢 鮎沢 橋原
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Week	下浜 小尾口 新屋敷	間下 小口	中屋 中村 横川	上浜 西堀	三沢 新倉
※No collection on the 5 <sup>th</sup> week					

Fluorescent Lights/Light Bulbs					
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1 <sup>st</sup> Week	岡谷	今井	東堀	小井川	小坂 花岡 駒沢 鮎沢 橋原
2 <sup>nd</sup> Week	下浜 小尾口 新屋敷	間下 小口	中屋 中村 横川	上浜 西堀	三沢 新倉
❖No collection on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> week					

Waste Paper/Used Cloth						
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week	今井 上浜 樋沢	三沢 横川	下浜 小口	駒沢 鮎沢 橋原	東堀	小尾口 西堀
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Week	新倉	小坂 花岡 中屋 中村	小井川	新屋敷	岡谷	間下
❖No collection on the 5 <sup>th</sup> week						

◇Find the designated garbage collection area near you. Refer to the residential districts below:

間下 (Mashita) 小尾口 (Koguchi) 小口 (Oguchi) 東堀 (Higashibori) 中屋 (Nakaya) 中村 (Nakamura) 横川 (Yokokawa) 下浜 (Shimohama) 上浜 (Kamihama) 新屋敷 (Arayashiki) 小井川 (Oikawa) 西堀 (Nishibori) 今井 (Imai) 岡谷 (Okaya) 小坂 (Osaka) 花岡 (Hanaoka) 三沢 (Misawa) 新倉 (Arakura) 駒沢 (Komazawa) 鮎沢 (Aizawa) 橋原 (Hashibara)

◇For Inquiries: Contact the Environment Division, Welfare and Environment Department