



KDCA

Korea Disease Control and
Prevention Agency

Updates on COVID-19 in Republic of Korea

21 October 2020

COVID-19 and influenza prevention updates

October 21, 2020

- With the annual influenza season approaching, KDCA is consulting with medical experts in preparation for possible simultaneous circulation of COVID-19 and influenza.
- Because COVID-19 and influenza are both respiratory viral infections with similar clinical symptoms, it may be difficult for frontline clinics to differentiate between the two when patients visit and present with such symptoms.
- The government has worked on making standard infection prevention rules and procedures in medical settings to help ensure safe healthcare environment.
- KDCA will continue the national influenza vaccination project and continue to promote individual hygiene and social distancing measures.
- KDCA will monitor influenza surveillance on a weekly basis and preemptive antiviral administration will be given to people presenting with influenza-like illness.
 - National Health Insurance coverage will be temporarily expanded to antiviral prescription for children, the elderly, and the immunocompromised regardless of influenza advisory starting mid-November. Coverage may be extended to other groups in the future depending on influenza circulation and advisory status.
- Diagnostic multiplex assay (PCR test) to detect and differentiate COVID-19 and influenza will be implemented by November and will be covered by the National Health Insurance.
 - Testing booths and personnel support may be provided for screening clinics with high demand in the future.
- KDCA recommends informing clinics of any respiratory symptoms or fever when making an appointment with a clinic.
 - KDCA also recommends asking about over-the-phone consultation/prescription availability or wearing a mask to visit a clinic or hospital.
- Hospitals and clinics should ask patients whether they have fever or respiratory symptoms when in advance and try to space out appointment times to prevent crowding.
- KDCA will prepare and distribute standard infection prevention protocols for healthcare facilities.