

May 21, 2021

## May 2021 Survey of *Sei-katsu-sha* Concerning COVID-19

Degree of freedom of life falls to 53.3 points in May, the lowest score since May 2020  
Anxieties and activity restriction also rise again

Hakuhodo Institute of Life and Living, a think tank of Hakuhodo Inc., conducted its “Survey of *Sei-katsu-sha* Concerning COVID-19” to understand *sei-katsu-sha*’s attitudes and behaviors during the coronavirus again in May 2021. The survey was conducted May 6–10 in the Greater Tokyo (Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba, Saitama and Ibaraki Prefectures), Greater Nagoya (Aichi, Mie and Gifu Prefectures) and Hanshin (Osaka, Kyoto, Hyogo and Nara Prefectures) areas, targeting 1,500 males and females aged 20–69. See p. 8 for the survey outline.

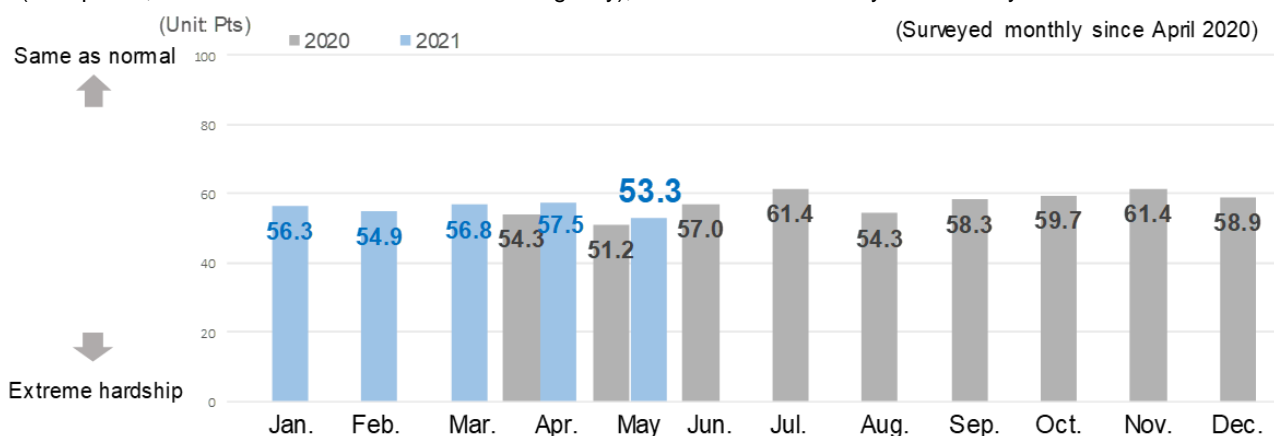
**Conditions prior to the survey being conducted:** From early to mid-April, the area under the Pre-emergency Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 expanded (with Tokyo and Kyoto, Okinawa, Saitama, Chiba, Kanagawa and Aichi Prefectures joining Osaka, Hyogo and Miyagi Prefectures). Amid continuous news reports of soaring cases and a medical system under pressure, particularly in Osaka, a state of emergency was declared for the third time in Tokyo and Osaka, Hyogo and Kyoto Prefectures on April 25. The number of cases with severe symptoms nationwide topped 1,000 each day beginning April 30. On May 7, the state of emergency in Tokyo and Osaka, Hyogo and Kyoto Prefectures was extended (until May 31), Pre-emergency Measures were extended in the five prefectures where they were in place, and were expanded to include Hokkaido, Gifu and Mie Prefectures (the measures were lifted in Miyagi Prefecture). Thus, the survey was once again conducted amid a flurry of changes.

### Degree of freedom of life under the influence of COVID-19

**May 2021: 53.3 pts**

Down 4.2 pts vs. last month  
Up 2.1 pts vs. the same month last year

When we asked respondents how they would rate the degree of freedom of their lives if their normal lives prior to the spread of COVID-19 rated 100 points, the score for May 2021 was 53.3 points. The figure was 4.2 points lower than the previous month, and the second lowest score since the survey began, but was 2.1 points higher than lowest score (51.2 points, recorded under the first state of emergency), which came in the May 2020 survey.



While values have been calculated to two decimal places in the survey, figures have been rounded to the nearest tenth in this article. Any discrepancies are due to rounding.

## Attitudes and behavior under the influence of COVID-19

**Degree of anxiety:** All scores up since last month. The government's response (82.3%, up 6.2 points), stands out. **Degree of activity restriction:** All scores also up since last month. Restriction of Nonessential and nonurgent shopping (77.6%, up 6.7 points) and Shaking hands, hugging and otherwise touching others and Eating out (both up 5.6 points) continues. **Degree of activity implementation:** Enjoy pastimes I can do at home (77.1%, up 9.2 points) and Avoid shopping at crowded times and/or reduce frequency of shopping (68.8%, up 7.5 points) stand out.

		Response rate Agree + Somewhat agree	Change vs. last month	Change vs. same month last year
<b>Degree of anxiety</b> Anxieties they feel	The government's response	82.3%	+6.2 pts	+1.2 pts
	The lack and uncertainty of information	67.1%	+4.2 pts	-10.8 pts
	Economic stagnation	81.3%	+4.0 pts	-8.9 pts
<b>Degree of activity restriction</b> Behaviors they refrain from	Nonessential and nonurgent shopping	77.6%	+6.7 pts	-13.0 pts
	Shaking hands, hugging and otherwise touching others	85.7%	+5.6 pts	N/A
	Eating out	80.5%	+5.6 pts	-10.5 pts
<b>Degree of activity implementation</b> Behaviors they implement	Enjoy pastimes I can do at home	77.1%	+9.2 pts	-9.8 pts
	Avoid shopping at crowded times and/or reduce frequency of shopping	68.8%	+7.5 pts	N/A
	Use net shopping and food delivery services	52.1%	+6.4 pts	-7.4 pts

## Degree of freedom of life under the influence of COVID-19

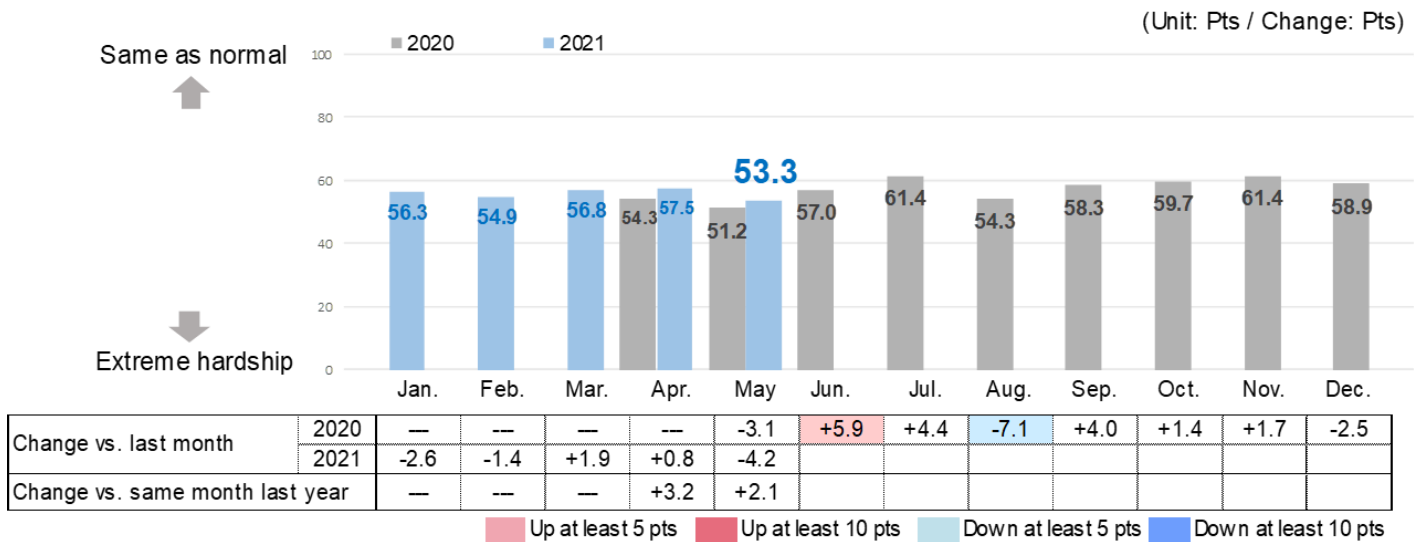
### Degree of freedom of life is 53.3 points in May. Down 4.2 points compared to last month and following May 2020, the second lowest score since the survey began

This time, the survey was conducted amid news reports about the worsening COVID-19 caseload and repeated government measures (the application and expansion of the Pre-emergency Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 and declaration of the third state of emergency in Tokyo and Osaka, Hyogo and Kyoto Prefectures). It seems that all this pushed down *sei-katsu-sha's* Degree of freedom of life scores. The lowest score since the survey began was 51.2 points in the May 2020 survey, which was conducted during the first state of emergency. While the current score is the second lowest, it is 2.1 points higher than last year's lowest score.

### In free responses, most comments expressed a mix of anxieties and dissatisfaction, such as “how long will this go on?” “the repeated declaring and lifting of states of emergency is terrifying,” and “I don’t have confidence in the government”

Comments from those who gave high Degree of freedom of life scores contained positive perspectives like “there are good and bad things,” “I can use time effectively” and “learn actively.” Those who gave medium scores mentioned anxieties and lack of confidence in the government, such as “how long will this inconvenient life go on?” and “when will we get the vaccine?” Regardless of how high or low a score they gave, there were comments to the effect that while personally they were okay, it was a shame for their kids. Comments from those who gave low scores included keen opinions like “we’ve not been able to hold memorial services,” “I can’t work from home and my income has dropped; I can’t even eat out and I’m exhausted,” “I have no confidence in a government that asks people stay home while trying to push through the Olympics,” “the repeated declaring and lifting of states of emergency is terrifying for people with underlying conditions.” Comments enumerating dissatisfaction, anxiety and anger about various restrictions also stood out.

#### ■ Degree of freedom of life



While values have been calculated to two decimal places in the survey, figures have been rounded to the nearest tenth in this article. Any discrepancies are due to rounding.

■ Reason for Degree of freedom of life score (Selected responses)

Degree of freedom of life	High (61 pts or higher)	Fewer opportunities to interact with colleagues and friends due to teleworking and not being able to travel or visit my home town due to staying at home are negatives, but being freed from a long commute and stress are positives, so I don't feel the condition of my life is so bad.	90 pts	Male, 54, Chiba Pref.
		There are restrictions on getting about using public transport and socializing when food and drink are involved, but on the plus side, the time I spend on getting to places and socializing has dropped significantly and I can use my time effectively, so I don't feel especially hard done by.	80 pts	Male, 46, Osaka Pref.
		Remote working is recommended, but no one says anything if I go in to my workplace, so I'm able to live life normally. But since the neighbors are watching, I am unable to visit my parents. My parents have said let's meet when they've had their vaccines.	80 pts	Female, 37, Saitama Pref.
		In trying to reduce contact with others, I'm unable to visit my relatives or go to children's play centers and leisure and entertainment facilities. I take walks round and round outside my home and visit quieter parks. My kids want to go outside, but I don't think my behavior is restricted so much. The spread of COVID-19 is not the fault of the government but something happening naturally, so I need to act myself. I think it's wrong to say it's being forced on us, that it's someone's fault, or to question how effective staying at home all this time has been.	70 pts	Female, 36, Osaka Pref.
		Because I'm a college student and am required to learn actively due to lectures going online.	65 pts	Male, 21, Aichi Pref.
	Medium (41–60 pts)	This inconvenient life is being forced on us, and I am concerned about how long the situation will go on.	60 pts	Male, 65, Osaka Pref.
		No one in my vicinity has it, so I'm not so concerned, but we also don't know when we'll get the vaccine, so I'm careful when I go out.	60 pts	Female, 62, Aichi Pref.
		All things I enjoy in my free time have been curtailed. My confidence in the government is now under 50%.	50 pts	Male, 51, Chiba Pref.
		I'm able to get by without changing my lifestyle too much, but I want to more actively give my daughter various experiences.	50 pts	Female, 35, Tokyo
		My income didn't drop much, but I have a small child and can't take her out to play or let her play with her friends. I gave this score because I am sorry I'm making things hard for my child.	50 pts	Female, 43, Osaka Pref.
	Low (40 pts or lower)	A member of my family passed away last year, but we had to limit the number of people who could come to the funeral. We haven't been able to hold memorial services since then, either. Plus, I've been avoiding meeting people and my work has been delayed, which has affected my income, too.	40 pts	Male, 52, Tokyo
		Mine is not a job you can do from home and I am taking full trains and serving countless customers, but even so, there are fewer customers and my income has dropped. When I come home tired, I can't even eat out and have to make dinner myself. I'm exhausted.	30 pts	Female, 40, Aichi Pref.
		I have zero confidence in a government that asks people to stay home while trying to push through the Olympics. I have no choice but to take care of myself on my own, and scrutinizing information and taking various measures is grinding my nerves. You can't see this thing, so the anxieties are great.	15 pts	Female, 24, Tokyo
		Things are extremely inconvenient and I have an underlying condition and think that fears are building up for people like me, because even fewer people are likely to take anti-infection measures with the repeated declaring and lifting of states of emergency.	15 pts	Male, 51, Hyogo Pref.
		I can't go to the gym I frequented until now; I can't drink or enjoy karaoke, even out of doors; I can't go to large shopping malls. It's like we can only go to the supermarket and convenience store, so I gave it an extremely low score.	10 pts	Female, 31, Osaka Pref.

## Attitudes and behaviors under COVID-19 (current) and behaviors once COVID-19 subsides (intention)

**Degree of anxiety: All scores up vs. last month. The government's response (82.3%, up 6.2 points), The lack and uncertainty of information (67.1%, up 4.2 points), Economic stagnation (81.3%, up 4.0 points)**

In change vs. the same month last year, while scores for many items decreased since last spring, concerns about Changes in my interpersonal relationships (up 3.2 points) and The government's response (up 1.2 points) have risen slightly.

**Degree of activity restriction: All scores up vs. last month. Restriction of Nonessential and nonurgent shopping (77.6%, up 6.7 points) and Shaking hands, hugging and otherwise touching others and Eating out (both up 5.6 points) stand out**

In change vs. the same month last year, scores were down in all items where comparisons can be made, with change in Nonessential and nonurgent shopping (down 13.0 points) and Eating out (down 10.5 points) particularly standing out.

In behaviors respondents think they will refrain from after COVID-19 subsides, scores for all items were lower than the current scores. The difference was particularly large for Travel and leisure activities (-37.6 points) and Experiential entertainment (-31.0 points).

**Degree of activity implementation: Enjoy pastimes I can do at home (77.1%, up 9.2 points) and Avoid shopping at crowded times and/or reduce frequency of shopping (68.8%, up 7.5 points), among others, stand out**

In change vs. the same month last year, Enjoy leisure activities outdoors where people don't gather (up 12.2 points) and Upgrade my home environment (up 11.7 points) scored higher, while Enjoy pastimes I can do at home (down 9.8 points) and other items, scored lower.

Behaviors that respondents gave higher intention than current scores included Enjoy leisure activities outdoors where people don't gather (+9.8 points) and Invest (+8.8 points). Meanwhile respondents gave lower intention than current scores to Enjoy pastimes I can do at home (-19.2 points) and Consistently wear a mask, wash my hands and take other precautions against infection (-10.4 points), among others.

### ■ Lifestyle attitudes and behaviors

(Unit: % / Change: Pts)

Degree of anxiety	Current: Anxieties they feel				
	Mar. 2021 survey	Apr. 2021 survey	May 2021 survey	Change vs. last month	Change vs. same month last year
The government's response	74.9	76.1	82.3	+6.2	+1.2
Economic stagnation	76.2	77.3	81.3	+4.0	-8.9
My and my family's health	67.4	68.3	71.9	+3.6	-2.0
The situation abroad	64.7	68.2	70.3	+2.1	-8.2
The lack and uncertainty of information	62.2	62.9	67.1	+4.2	-10.8
My and my family's jobs and income	59.5	59.1	60.7	+1.6	-3.2
Changes in my interpersonal relationships	46.3	46.1	47.8	+1.7	+3.2

(Unit: % / Change: Pts)

Degree of activity restriction	Current: Behaviors they refrain from					Intention: Behaviors they intend to refrain from after COVID-19 subsidies					Intention vs. Current (Most recent month)
	Mar. 2021 survey	Apr. 2021 survey	May 2021 survey	Change vs. last month	Change vs. same month last year	Mar. 2021 survey	Apr. 2021 survey	May 2021 survey	Change vs. last month	Change vs. same month last year	
	Travel and leisure activities	86.5	84.3	88.8	+4.5	-4.1	52.6	55.2	51.2	-4.0	
Shaking hands, hugging and otherwise touching others	81.9	80.1	85.7	+5.6	---	64.7	65.8	65.1	-0.7	---	-20.6
Nonessential and nonurgent trips	82.1	80.5	85.1	+4.6	-9.1	58.0	60.4	58.9	-1.5	---	-26.2
Experiential entertainment (gigs, theater, movies, etc.)	81.2	79.5	84.9	+5.4	-6.1	52.3	55.7	53.9	-1.8	---	-31.0
Meeting friends and socializing	81.3	79.1	84.5	+5.4	-5.2	52.5	54.9	54.7	-0.2	---	-29.8
Eating out	76.7	74.9	80.5	+5.6	-10.5	50.2	53.4	51.4	-2.0	---	-29.1
Nonessential and nonurgent shopping	75.2	70.9	77.6	+6.7	-13.0	55.5	56.7	56.3	-0.4	---	-21.3

(Unit: % / Change: Pts)

Degree of activity implementation	Current: Behaviors they implement					Intention: Behaviors they intend to implement after COVID-19 subsidies					Intention vs. Current (Most recent month)
	Mar. 2021 survey	Apr. 2021 survey	May 2021 survey	Change vs. last month	Change vs. same month last year	Mar. 2021 survey	Apr. 2021 survey	May 2021 survey	Change vs. last month	Change vs. same month last year	
	Consistently wear a mask, wash my hands and take other precautions against infection	92.4	91.7	94.2	+2.5	-1.4	82.8	82.0	83.8	+1.8	
Make sure to get sufficient exercise, nutrition and sleep	75.9	72.7	77.5	+4.8	-2.0	82.3	79.7	83.8	+4.1	---	+6.3
Enjoy pastimes I can do at home	69.9	67.9	77.1	+9.2	-9.8	57.1	57.9	57.9	±0	---	-19.2
Keep a stock of anti-infection products and everyday necessities	69.6	69.5	73.1	+3.6	+6.0	71.0	68.9	71.8	+2.9	---	-1.3
Avoid shopping at crowded times and/or reduce frequency of shopping	---	61.3	68.8	+7.5	---	---	60.6	61.1	+0.5	---	-7.7
Use cashless payment options as much as possible	61.9	64.9	65.7	+0.8	---	64.8	67.1	69.1	+2.0	---	+3.4
Use stores and facilities that take stringent anti-infection measures	---	55.9	61.9	+6.0	---	---	57.7	62.1	+4.4	---	+0.2
Cook myself as much as possible	56.9	57.9	60.6	+2.7	-4.5	64.3	63.4	66.9	+3.5	---	+6.3
Drive to places	50.8	51.1	54.0	+2.9	-3.0	49.6	47.8	50.2	+2.4	---	-3.8
Use net shopping and food delivery services	46.3	45.7	52.1	+6.4	-7.4	42.8	45.7	47.0	+1.3	---	-5.1
Play video games on my smartphone, computer, etc.	48.3	48.3	50.8	+2.5	-4.5	47.7	46.5	49.1	+2.6	---	-1.7
Use video, music and other streaming services	45.5	46.5	49.5	+3.0	-1.4	47.3	48.9	49.6	+0.7	---	+0.1

Do exercises I can do at home	45.5	44.2	49.1	+4.9	-6.8	51.0	48.8	52.8	+4.0	---	+3.7
Exercise outside where people don't gather	44.5	41.1	45.5	+4.4	+0.2	49.2	49.5	49.7	+0.2	---	+4.2
Enjoy leisure activities outdoors where people don't gather	43.4	45.5	44.7	-0.8	+12.2	53.4	55.5	54.5	-1.0	---	+9.8
Read and post on social media	41.2	39.3	41.9	+2.6	-0.4	49.7	45.7	48.1	+2.4	---	+6.2
Commute to work/school during off-peak hours as much as possible	38.7	36.7	39.7	+3.0	-3.3	38.9	38.7	40.3	+1.6	---	+0.6
Upgrade my home environment by updating the telecommunications environment, buying home appliances, etc.	29.0	29.9	34.6	+4.7	+11.7	39.0	38.1	39.3	+1.2	---	+4.7
Telework (work from home) as much as possible [Those with jobs*]	34.2	30.7	32.2	+1.5	-9.1	32.4	31.7	32.3	+0.6	---	+0.1
Second job (incl. considering one)	30.1	30.1	29.2	-0.9	+5.3	33.3	32.7	31.1	-1.6	---	+1.9
Make things by hand (handcrafts, home improvements, DIY, etc.)	26.4	25.9	28.7	+2.8	-2.5	33.2	33.2	33.9	+0.7	---	+5.2
Buy slightly better things than normal	26.7	27.9	27.1	-0.8	+6.2	32.9	31.9	33.1	+1.2	---	+6.0
Invest	26.9	25.7	26.2	+0.5	+8.5	37.8	34.8	35.0	+0.2	---	+8.8
Post and sell things on flea market apps and net auctions	22.5	24.8	25.0	+0.2	+5.9	28.6	29.7	29.3	-0.4	---	+4.3
Buy things on flea market apps and net auctions	23.3	25.3	22.9	-2.4	+3.4	29.5	29.3	27.8	-1.5	---	+4.9
Get a job, change jobs or start a business (incl. considering these)	24.8	23.5	22.7	-0.8	+4.6	28.0	27.1	24.5	-2.6	---	+1.8
Support businesses and organizations	19.2	19.8	20.1	+0.3	+0.4	25.1	24.1	23.5	-0.6	---	+3.4
Participate in online drinking parties and dinners	18.4	19.6	19.5	-0.1	+0.9	19.5	19.7	17.4	-2.3	---	-2.1
Study online	18.7	18.6	18.9	+0.3	±0	25.5	25.9	23.1	-2.8	---	+4.2
Move homes, carry out home improvements, live in multiple locations (incl. considering these)	---	16.2	16.3	+0.1	---	---	21.7	21.5	-0.2	---	+5.2

\* Those with jobs: March n=1,075 April n=1,074 May n=1,062

Up at least 5 pts
  Up at least 10 pts
  Down at least 5 pts
  Down at least 10 pts

## Survey outline

### ■ Question items (question text)

#### Degree of freedom of life under the influence of COVID-19

If your normal life prior to the spread of COVID-19 rates 100 points, and extreme hardship due to the spread of the virus rates 0, how would you rate the degree of freedom of your current life? (Give a figure from 0–100)  
Also give the reason(s) for your rating. (Free response)

#### Attitudes and behavior under the influence of COVID-19 (Current)

Below is a series of opinions given as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19.

For each, select the opinion that best matches your feelings and/or behavior. (Single response: Agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Disagree)

#### Behavior after COVID-19 subsides (Intention)

Will you engage in the following behaviors in the future even if concerns about becoming infected with COVID-19 have subsided?

For each, select the option that best matches your intentions. (Single response: Think I will, Think I will sometimes, Think I won't much, Think I won't)

Territories: (1) Greater Tokyo (40 km radius) (Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba, Saitama, Ibaraki Prefectures)  
(2) Greater Nagoya (40 km radius) (Aichi, Mie, Gifu Prefectures)  
(3) Hanshin (30 km radius) (Osaka, Kyoto, Hyogo, Nara Prefectures)

Respondents: Males and females aged 20–69

Target allocations: 500 respondents per territory, allocated based on the population demographics (gender/age group) of the territory

Sample sizes: 1,500 per survey

#### April 2020–March 2021

	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60–69	Total
Males	122	145	190	161	137	755
Females	119	141	185	158	142	745
Total	241	286	375	319	279	1,500

#### From April 2021

(People)

	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60–69	Total
Males	122	143	187	169	136	757
Females	118	139	183	164	139	743
Total	240	282	370	333	275	1,500

Survey method: Internet survey

Survey period: May 6 (Thu)–10 (Mon), 2021

(Survey conducted at the beginning of each month since March 2020)

Planning/Analysis: Hakuodo Institute of Life and Living

Conducted by: H. M. Marketing Research, Inc.

Reference: Major developments in society during the survey periods

#### 2020

April: State of emergency declared for seven prefectures (until May 6)

State of emergency expanded nationwide

May: State of emergency lifted in 39 prefectures

State of emergency lifted in Osaka, Hyogo and Kyoto Prefectures

State of emergency lifted in all 47 prefectures, including Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba, Saitama and Hokkaido

June: Tokyo Alert system for signaling warning information commences operation

September: Bookings for the Go To Travel campaign commence in Tokyo

October: Bookings for the Go To Eat campaign commence

November: The Prime Minister announces temporary suspension of the Go To Travel campaign

(Bookings for areas where the coronavirus was surging)

Suspension of the Go To Eat campaign in 10 prefectures, including Tokyo and Osaka Prefecture

December: Suspension of the Go To Travel campaign in Tokyo

Suspension of the Go To Travel campaign nationwide



**2021**

- January: State of emergency declared for Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba and Saitama, then expanded to 11 prefectures
- February: Decision made to extend the state of emergency until March 7
- March: State of emergency lifted in Osaka, Hyogo and Kyoto Prefectures, then lifted in Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba and Saitama on March 21
- April 5: Pre-emergency Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 applied in six cities in Osaka, Hyogo and Miyagi Prefectures

**Developments at the time of this survey in detail**

- April 12 Pre-emergency Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 expanded to Tokyo and Kyoto and Okinawa Prefectures (until May 11)
- April 20 Pre-emergency Measures expanded to Saitama, Chiba, Kanagawa and Aichi Prefectures (until May 11)
- April 25 Third state of emergency declared for Tokyo and Osaka, Hyogo and Kyoto Prefectures (until May 11)
- April 30 Cases with severe symptoms reach 1,020. This figure has remained over 1,000 every day since
- May 7 Decision made to extend the state of emergency in Tokyo and Osaka, Hyogo and Kyoto Prefectures until May 31  
(Decision made to also apply the state of emergency to Aichi and Fukuoka Prefectures from May 12)  
Pre-emergency Measures continue in Kanagawa, Chiba, Saitama, Ehime and Okinawa Prefectures  
Also expanded to Hokkaido, Gifu and Mie Prefectures. Decision made to lift the Pre-emergency Measures in Miyagi Prefecture

**Notes:**

This survey will be conducted regularly for the time being. (The survey content may be changed depending on changes in circumstances)

Previous news releases (from the April 2020 release) can be found at the URL below.

<https://www.hakuhodo-global.com/news>

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