

1. 18th Japanese Speech Contest

The 18th Japanese Speech Contest will be held on February 11th at Hotel Sunroute Tochigi.

Foreigners whose native language is not Japanese and who have lived in Japan for less than 5 years will present their speeches on topics such as their feelings about life in Japan, their country and family, and their hopes for the future.

This year, 21 people from 9 countries, including Pakistan, Indonesia and Vietnam, will participate.

Please come and support those who will be giving their speeches. We look forward to seeing you there.

2. Tochigi City Comprehensive Disaster Drill

Last year on November 25, the Tochigi City Comprehensive Disaster Drill was held at the Iwafune Sports Ground in Tochigi City.

The Tochigi City International Association participated in the drill to open a multilingual support center in case of disaster. 13 Filipino, Nepalese, and Peruvian nationals participated in the role of foreign disaster victims and interpreters. They went through listening training at evacuation and multilingual support centers to communicate through interpreters in emergency situations.

The training was conducted under the assumption that Tochigi City was struck by a major earthquake measuring 6 on the Japanese seismic scale. On January 1, this year, a 7.6 magnitude earthquake occurred on the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture, with a magnitude of 7 on the Japanese seismic scale. The earthquake caused extensive damage, including collapsed homes, fires, tsunamis, road subsidence, and landslides.

Residents who are unable to live in their own homes are still living in evacuation centers. Victims continue to suffer from water and power outages, lack of toilets, and the cold winter weather, making their evacuation anxious and difficult.

Something like The Noto earthquake can strike at any time. You never know when or where the earthquake early warning system could sound.

It is important to be aware of stockpiling drinking water, food, medical supplies, etc. on a daily basis so that you will not be in trouble in case of a disaster.

3. Problems with Subscription Purchases

Recently, there have been many cases of problems with purchases made through a smartphone.

For example, there was a problem with a subscription purchase in which a customer ordered a supplement for 500 yen the first time, and from the second payment the price was 3,980 yen, and the customer was told they could cancel at any time. However, after taking the supplement for several months, the customer decided that they no longer needed it and called the company, but the phone was disconnected and the customer could not cancel.

As in this example, there are an increasing number of problems with disconnected calls and difficulties with cancellation.

To avoid problems, check whether you can cancel or return the product before you buy it. Also, print or take a screenshot of the sales website or the final confirmation screen of the application to record the details of the contract. Beware of sales terms such as "special price" or "only available now".

If you have any problems, contact the Consumer Affairs Center in the Citizen's Life Division on the second floor of the main building of Tochigi City Hall, or call 0282-23-8899.

4. Beware of norovirus

Infections and food poisoning caused by norovirus occur throughout the year, but are especially common during the winter months.

Infections occur when norovirus-infected food is eaten raw or undercooked. In particular, infection from "oysters" is common.

It can also be transmitted when norovirus enters the body through the mouth via the hands that have come into contact with the vomit or feces of a person infected with norovirus.

Norovirus infection causes severe nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. In most cases, symptoms will go away within a day or two. However, children and the elderly may experience prolonged symptoms. Repeated vomiting, inability to drink fluids, and prolonged diarrhea can cause loss of fluids in the body, leading to dehydration.

If dehydration is severe, go to an emergency room or call an ambulance immediately. If symptoms are mild and can be treated at home, do not use anti-diarrheal medicines. If you are able to drink fluids, drink oral rehydration solution or sports drinks often to prevent dehydration.

The basic rule for preventing norovirus infection is frequent hand washing with soap and running water. It is especially important to wash hands thoroughly before cooking and eating, and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and disposing of garbage.