

1. Transitioning to the MyNa insurance card

As of December 2, 2024, the current insurance card will no longer be issued and will be replaced by a new system based on the MyNa insurance card. The current insurance card can be used until its expiration date (which is July 31, 2025) as long as there are no changes in name, address, percentage of partial payment, etc. after December 2, 2012.

If you do not yet have a Myna Insurance Card, please obtain one and register to use your My Number Card as your health insurance card. You can register your Myna Insurance Card for use as a health insurance card at medical institutions and pharmacies using a card reader.

When you use your Myna Insurance Card at a medical facility or pharmacy, you place your card on the facial recognition card reader. To authenticate your identity, you will be asked to enter either facial recognition or a four-digit PIN number. Finally, you will be asked to agree to provide other various types of information to complete the process.

The advantage of using your health insurance card with the My Number Card is that you can receive better medical care based on your past medication and medical treatment history. Also, you will not have to pay high price for sudden surgery or hospitalization. In case of emergency transportation, if you carry your My Number Card, it will be used for appropriate first aid and hospital selection.

In addition to its use as a health insurance card, it can be used in a variety of situations in daily life. Please carry and use your My Number Card regularly.

2 Revision of the traffic law regarding bicycles

From November 2024, the Road Traffic Law will prohibit the use of a smartphone while riding a bicycle. Talking on a smartphone or looking at the screen while riding a bicycle will be prohibited, except when the bicycle is stopped. The penalties will be more severe than before.

If you engage in talking on the phone while riding a bicycle, you will be subject to imprisonment for up to six months or a fine of up to 100,000 yen. If you cause a traffic accident by using a smart phone while riding a bicycle, you may be imprisoned for up to one year or fined up to 300,000 yen.

In addition, a fine will also be imposed for riding while intoxicated on a bicycle. Riding under the influence of alcohol is punishable by up to three years imprisonment or a fine of up to 500,000 yen.

Offering alcoholic beverages or a bicycle to a person who may be riding under the influence of alcohol is also prohibited, and a fine will be imposed.

In addition to using a cell phone and riding under the influence of alcohol, it is also prohibited to ride with an umbrella, to use earphones or headphones so that one cannot hear the sounds or voices necessary for safe riding, to ride with two other riders, or to ride side by side. Each of these offenses is punishable by a fine of up to 50,000 yen and other penalties.

Bicycle operators who repeatedly commit dangerous violations are required to take a bicycle operator training course. Those who ignore the order and fail to take the course will be fined up to 50,000 yen.

The reason for these stricter bicycle rules is that the number of traffic accidents involving bicycles has continued to rise in recent years. Please review the rules for bicycling and use bicycles safely.

3. About Flu Prevention

We are now in the flu season. Influenza is a respiratory infection caused by the influenza virus and is an infectious disease that should be distinguished from the common cold, which is basically a mild illness.

The main way influenza is transmitted is by droplet infection, which is caused by small droplets of water from the mouth when coughing or sneezing. Once infected, symptoms include sudden high fever, headache, arthralgia, and muscle aches after an incubation period of 24 to 72 hours.

Influenza is characterized by its tendency to cause bronchitis and pneumonia, which can lead to serious illness, and the elderly are at particularly high risk of serious illness.

Although vaccination against influenza cannot completely prevent the onset of the disease itself, it can prevent the severity of symptoms and reduce the risk of death from complications.

It takes about two weeks after vaccination for a person to develop resistance to influenza, and the effect is said to last for about five months. Therefore, it is important to get vaccinated before the flu season starts.

The risk of influenza infection can be reduced by thoroughly following basic infection control measures such as cough etiquette, hand washing, avoiding the close, dense, and enclosed spaces, ventilation, and wearing appropriate masks.

Also, do not go out if you are not feeling well. If you have a fever or other symptoms, call your healthcare provider first.