

Learning with manga

Masks and Cough Etiquette



When you have a cough or need to sneeze, it is good manners to wear a mask out of consideration for the people around you. Especially in places where people gather, such as trains, buses or the workplace, help prevent infection by following the proper cough etiquette of covering your mouth and nose with a mask, tissue, handkerchief, or your sleeve.

“とも” provides helpful advice on living in Japan, tips for learning the Japanese language, and other such information, in Japanese with furigana and nine foreign languages (Vietnamese, Chinese, Filipino, Indonesian, Thai, Cambodian, Burmese, Mongolian, and English).

(<https://www.jitco.or.jp/ja/tomo/>)



What Should You Do If You Become Pregnant During Your Technical Intern Training or Specified Skilled Worker Program?

In Japan, it is against the law for an employer to make you leave your technical intern training or Specified Skilled Worker program simply because you become pregnant. Here, we explain what you should do if you become pregnant during your program.



Q What should I do if I become pregnant?

- A
- See an obstetrician-gynecologist for a medical checkup.
 - Consult your company and your supervising organization/registered support organization.
 - Submit a pregnancy notification at your local municipal office.



Q What will happen to my training as a technical intern trainee or my job as a Specified Skilled Worker?

- A
- Whether you are a technical intern trainee or a Specified Skilled Worker, your company and supervising organization/registered support organization is not allowed to make you leave the program simply because you become pregnant.
 - If you wish, you may take time off from your program starting six weeks before your expected delivery date. In addition, to protect your health, in Japan you are generally not allowed to work for eight weeks from the day after giving birth. Whether you receive wages during this period depends on your company's rules, but if no wages are paid, you may receive a maternity allowance (approximately 60% of

- your salary) through your health insurance.
- If you wish, you may also suspend your technical intern training/Specified Skilled Worker program, temporarily return to your home country to give birth, and then resume your training/work. Please consult your supervising organization/registered support organization and your company.
- If certain conditions are met, you may also take childcare leave. There are also a lump-sum childbirth and childcare allowance available through your health insurance.
- The period during which you are unable to work as a Specified Skilled Worker (i) due to pregnancy, childbirth, or childcare (pre- and post-natal leave and childcare leave) will not be counted toward your total five-year period of stay, if approved.

Q Where can I go for advice?

- A
- When you find out that you are pregnant, first consult with someone close to you such as at your company or your supervising organization/registered support organization. You will need to make arrangements regarding whether to continue your training/work or temporarily return to your home country, as well as the procedures related to pregnancy and childbirth and medical checkups. You will also need to arrange your child's status of residence after birth.

When you find out that you are pregnant, do not worry about it on your own. Consult your partner or family, your company, your supervising organization/registered support organization, the Organization for Technical Intern Training (OTIT), or a public consultation service as early as possible. Pregnancy and childbirth will have a significant impact on your future, so you will need to act with awareness and responsibility.

— If you need help —

Consultation services

The Organization for Technical Intern Training (OTIT) offers consultations via both telephone and email.

Consultation services for foreign residents are also provided at public institutions in the area where you live (your prefecture or municipality).



Reference information

The *Guidebook on Living and Working*, available on the Foreign Residents Support Portal Site operated by the Immigration Services Agency, provides information not only on childbirth and childcare but also on many other aspects of daily life in Japan. It is available in easy Japanese and 18 other languages.



Let's Try Natto!



Natto—its appearance and smell often put people off, saying that they don't like it, they can't eat it, or that they've never tried it. Natto is a traditional Japanese fermented food made by fermenting soybeans with natto bacteria, and has long been eaten as an everyday staple. Its sticky texture and distinctive aroma are its defining characteristics, but it is also highly nutritious and rich in quality protein, vitamins, and calcium.

Natto can be eaten in various ways, but the easiest is natto over rice: mix the natto well with the sauce and mustard that are included in the package, then spoon it over a bowl of steaming hot rice. It is a classic Japanese breakfast dish, which alone makes a complete breakfast

for many people.

Natto has a strong flavor, but a little creativity makes it easier to appreciate. You could add natto to your usual fried rice to create natto fried rice, which has a rich, toasty flavor. You could also give your toast a twist by putting natto on sliced bread and topping it with cheese, try a pasta variation by mixing natto with hot pasta and seasoning it with soy sauce or butter, or enjoy natto as a topping for curry.

Natto is easy to find in Japan and can be purchased anywhere with ease. Overcome your hesitation and give it a try!

Health Benefits of Natto

Eating natto is said to be good for dieting because it is low in calories, rich in protein that helps build muscle, and boosts basal metabolism, making it easier to maintain a healthy body weight.

In addition, the enzyme nattokinase contained in natto is believed to help prevent blood clots and improve blood circulation, thereby relieving sensitivity to cold and swelling.



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