

Kocoforre News

Issue 7: Winter 2025

"Kocoforre" is the nickname for the Kochi Consultation Center for Foreign Residents

As the temperature begins to drop, we hope you're all staying warm and comfortable. In Kocoforre News, we introduce our center's activities and useful information for foreign residents of Kochi, those who are connected with foreigners, and people interested in multiculturalism.

Topics Pregnancy and Childbirth

At Kocoforre, we've been receiving an increasing number of consultations regarding pregnancy and childbirth.

Many foreign residents in Japan face challenges navigating the differences in healthcare systems, language, and culture compared to their home countries. In this edition, we'll share valuable information on pregnancy and childbirth to help expecting mothers and their families approach this important time with peace of mind.

From Pregnancy to Child Rearing – How It's Done in Japan



1. Visiting the Gynecologist

The ideal time to visit the gynecologist is **between 5 and 6 weeks** after the first day of your last menstrual period. This allows you to make informed decisions regarding a potential pregnancy. During your initial consultation, you will be asked about your menstrual cycle and overall health, so it's a good idea to have this information ready.

Also, please keep in mind that, in Kochi Prefecture, the number of facilities where you can give birth is decreasing. Therefore, it's important to schedule your delivery appointment as soon as you confirm your pregnancy. If you're unsure which hospitals offer delivery services, please consult your municipal office for guidance.



* Getting a Maternal and Child Health Handbook

Once you know you're pregnant...

The Maternal and Child Health Handbook is an invaluable document that includes records of your child's health, vaccinations, and more. You can receive this handbook at your municipal office or public health center (based on the expectant mother's Certificate of Residence) by submitting a pregnancy notification. (Kochi City also provides Maternal and Child Health Handbooks in English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Tagalog, and Japanese.)

2. Getting Maternity Health Checkups

In Japan, expectant mothers can receive regular checkups to monitor the health of both the mother and the baby during pregnancy. These checkups typically include monitoring your blood pressure, body weight, and urine and blood tests, as well as ultrasound examinations to ensure the baby is healthy, growing well, and to detect any signs of miscarriage, premature delivery, or growth delays. These checkups are essential for ensuring a safe delivery for both you and your baby, so be sure to schedule them. (Note: The examinations conducted may vary depending on the clinic.)

When	until the 6th month	7th to 9th month	7th to 9th month
How often	once every 4 weeks	once every 2 weeks	once a week
Total number of appointments	4 times	6 times	4 times



Scan here for more information on health checkups

*Be sure to use a Pregnancy General Health Examination Aid Slip!

You can reduce costs during pregnancy using the **Pregnancy General Health Examination Aid Slip**, which allows for government subsidies on maternity health check-ups, covering up to 14 visits. (Note: Maternity health check-ups are not covered by insurance, so without this aid, you would be responsible for the full cost.)

To take advantage of this subsidy, submit a **Pregnancy Notification Form** to your local government office as soon as you find out you're pregnant. You will then receive the **Pregnancy General Health Examination Aid Slip** along with your **Maternal and Child Health Handbook**. However, please note that some types of examinations may not be eligible for subsidies.

3. Giving birth and staying at the hospital

In Japan, mothers typically stay in the hospital for about 5 days after giving birth. Communicate with the hospital staff in advance to ensure you have everything you need during this time. You will also have the opportunity to receive health check-ups for both you and your baby, along with valuable advice on childcare, such as breastfeeding and diaper changing.

*Remember to apply for a Childbirth Lump-Sum Allowance in advance!

The **Childbirth Lump-Sum Allowance** provides a 500,000 yen subsidy (as of October 2024) for childbirth and hospital expenses, available through your health insurance or National Health Insurance. If you have health insurance, you can use the **Direct Payment System**, where the hospital applies for the allowance on your behalf. The money is then paid directly to the hospital if you complete the necessary procedures at the hospital. (Note: Be sure to check with the hospital in advance if you plan to use the Direct Payment System, as you'll need to follow specific procedures during your pregnancy.)

For **National Health Insurance**, you can find out more information at your local government office. For other types of health insurance, procedures and required documents may vary, so we recommend asking your employer for more information. In Japan, the average cost of childbirth and hospital stays is approximately 500,000 yen. If your total costs exceed the Childbirth Lump-Sum Allowance of 500,000 yen, you will be responsible for paying the difference.



To-do list of procedures after giving birth



Although you might have your hands full with your new baby, there are still a couple of things you need to do.

We have compiled a table below detailing the necessary paperwork that needs to be completed after giving birth.

Task	When	Where
1. Submit Birth Certificate	within 14 days, incl. delivery date	Your local municipal office
2. Obtain Citizenship	after birth, as soon as possible	Embassy/consulate of parents' nationality
3. Apply for Permission to Acquire Status of Residence	within 30 days, incl. delivery date	Your local immigration bureau
4. Apply for Health Insurance	after birth, as soon as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For social insurance: your place of work For national health insurance: your local municipal office
5. Apply for Child Benefits	within 15 days after the delivery date	Your local municipal office
6. Apply for Children's Medical Aid	after birth, as soon as possible	Your local municipal office

Once you've had a baby as a foreign couple, here are 3 important things you need to do!

1. Submit Birth Notification

Submit a **Birth Notification** to your municipal office within 14 days of your baby's birth. If your baby has a foreign nationality, please write your baby's name in katakana, and latin alphabet underneath. If you are from a country that uses Chinese characters, you may also use those (some characters may not be accepted). *(Note: If you haven't submitted the notification within 14 days, you may be unable to register your child's residence or receive a status of residence.)*

What to bring: **Birth Certificate and Maternal and Child Health Handbook**

2. Obtain Citizenship

If one parent is a Japanese national, their child will automatically acquire Japanese citizenship. However, if both parents are foreign nationals, the child will not be eligible for Japanese citizenship. In this case, the child must obtain nationality and a passport according to the laws of the parents' respective countries. For more detailed information, please contact your country's embassy or consulate.

3. Apply for Permission to Acquire Status of Residence

Your child will also need a status of residence. Remember to apply for Permission to Acquire Status of Residence at an immigration bureau within 30 days of your child's birth. *(Note: staying in Japan for more than 60 days without applying for a status of residence is considered as overstaying one's visa. If you and your baby plan to stay in Japan for longer than 60 days, be sure to submit an application for a status of residence within 30 days.)*

What to bring:

- **Passport** (if issued);
- **Application Form for Permission to Acquire Status of Residence;**
- **Birth Certificate** (*1) or other document proving birth;
- **Documents relating to occupation in Japan** (certificate of employment, income certificate, etc.);
- **Copy of Residence Certificate listing all household members** (*2).

Items 1 and 2 can be obtained from your local government office.

For more information, refer to Immigration and Residence Management Agency's website:

<https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/applications/procedures/16-10.html?hl=en>



Announcements from Kocoforre



Consultation Visits

Kocoforre held several consultation visits on August 22nd in Tosa City, November 10th in Tosa City, and December 8th in Nankoku City. Foreign residents, as well as individuals and companies associated with them, attended. Experts from the Takamatsu Regional Immigration Bureau provided consultations on matters such as residence status and international employment. Kocoforre staff also offered general consultations on life in Japan.

Global Career Fair

Kocoforre participated in the 2024 Global Career Fair in Kochi, hosted by Kochi Prefecture at Otepia Library on Thursday, October 17. The event featured 12 companies looking to hire foreign talent. A total of 34 foreign residents interested in working in Kochi Prefecture attended.

Free Legal Consultation Week for Foreigners

Kocoforre held a 'Free Legal Consultation Week for Foreigners' from September 30th to October 5th. Foreign residents and those associated with them were able to receive legal consultations from lawyers of the Kochi Bar Association free of charge. The lawyers listened carefully to clients' issues and provided professional legal advice. We will host our second "Free Legal Consultation Week for Foreigners" from February 25th to March 1st of 2025.

Kocoforre Supporters Wanted!

Kocoforre is looking for volunteers to support foreign residents living in Kochi. Primary duties include assistance with paperwork and interpreting at municipal offices and other related institutions. You don't have to speak a foreign language to apply. Please contact Kocoforre if you are interested!

Kocoforre Consultation Sessions

※For more information, check out our website and follow us on social media.

February 25th (Tue) - March 1st(Sat), 2025	Free Legal Consultation Week for Foreigners	Kocoforre (Address: 4-1-37 Honmachi, Kochi-shi)	Lawyers will be giving free consultations to all clients regardless of financial means (excluding corporations).
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Website



Available in Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Indonesian, and Vietnamese.

Instagram



We provide useful information on living in Japan in simple Japanese and foreign languages.

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