

## 1. Pregnancy

## 1-1. Maternal and child health handbook

Once you learn about your pregnancy, report it to your local municipal office as soon as possible.

The office will issue you a maternal and child health handbook (*boshi kenko techo*) and give you tickets for receiving subsidized prenatal checkups and information on consultations with public health nurses and other professionals and prenatal classes, for example.

The maternal and child health handbook is designed to enable healthcare professionals to note and view all required health records from pregnancy to birth and beyond including the period from infancy to early childhood and to allow parents and guardians to note and manage information.

## 1-2. Prenatal health checkups

During pregnancy, you must take even greater care of your health than usual. Please have regular prenatal checkups and manage your health according to the advice of doctors, midwives, and other healthcare professionals.

It is best to have a checkup once every four weeks from early pregnancy until week 23, once every two weeks from week 24 to week 35, and once a week from week 36 until birth.

## 1-3. Home visits by a public health nurse, midwife, or other healthcare professional

A public health nurse, midwife, or other healthcare professional will visit you at your home to give you advice on home life, meals, and other relevant topics and respond to any uncertainties or concerns you may have about pregnancy or childbirth or questions about caring for an infant. There is no fee for these visits. For details, please visit your local municipal office.

## 1-4. Prenatal classes (for mothers and fathers)

Your municipality holds prenatal classes on pregnancy, childbirth, parenting, nutrition, and other relevant topics. These classes are also an opportunity to meet and talk with other expecting parents.

## 2. Procedure after birth

### 2-1. Notification of birth

Regardless of your child's nationality, a notification of birth must be submitted within 14 days of birth for all children born in Japan.

Submit the notification of birth to the municipality where your child was born or the municipality of the person submitting the notification.  
(See Chapter 2, number 4.)

### 2-2. Obtaining Japanese nationality for your child

If both parents do not have Japanese nationality, your child cannot obtain Japanese nationality even if he or she is born in Japan.

The procedure for acquisition of Japanese nationality for your child must be completed at the embassy or consulate in Japan for the country of which the father or mother is a citizen. (See Chapter 2, number 4.)

## 3. Childbirth expenses and allowances

As pregnancy and childbirth are not illnesses, they are not generally covered by health insurance, but C-sections and other surgical procedures are covered by health insurance.

### 3-1. Lump sum birth allowance

This is a system for paying out a fixed amount as insurance benefits based on the Health Insurance Act and other laws to reduce the financial burden of childbirth when the mother is enrolled in employees' health insurance or the national health insurance program, or the dependent of someone who is enrolled in an employees' health insurance program.

There are two types of payment systems: the direct payment system and the proxy recipient system.

- Direct payment system: In this system, the medical institution requests and receives the lump-sum allowance for childbirth on the mother's behalf. As the lump-sum allowance is paid directly to the medical institution, you do not have to pay the full amount of childbirth for childbirth expenses at the payment counter when leaving the hospital.
- Proxy recipient system: In this system, when requesting the lump-sum allowance for childbirth from the Health Insurance Association or other association you are enrolled in, you request the medical institution where your child will be born to receive the allowance so that it is paid directly to the medical institution.

### 3-2. Childbirth allowance

If you are enrolled in health insurance yourself and must take a leave of absence from work without pay, you will receive a childbirth allowance for the duration you were absent within the period starting 42 days before birth (the due date) and ending 56 days after the date of birth (98 days for multiples).

The date of birth is included in the period prior to the date when the child is born. If the actual date of birth is later than the due date, you will also receive a childbirth allowance for the delayed period.

### 3-3. Childcare leave benefits

If you are enrolled in unemployment insurance and take childcare leave to care for a child who is less than one year of age (one year and two months if certain conditions are met or one year and six months or two years if other certain conditions are met) and meet certain conditions, for example your earnings during childcare leave drop to less than 80% of the earnings you made when starting your leave, you can apply for benefits at Hello Work to receive the benefits.

### 3-4. Child allowance

The child allowance is given to ensure a stable home environment and healthy development of children.

#### (1) Eligibility

Households raising a child until the first March 31<sup>st</sup> after their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday

#### (2) Amount

<b>Age of child</b>	<b>Amount of child allowance (monthly amount per child)</b>
Under 3	Uniform amount of 15,000 yen
From 3 years until the first March 31 <sup>st</sup> after their 12 <sup>th</sup> birthday	10,000 yen (15,000 yen for third child and on)
From the first March 31 <sup>st</sup> after their 12 <sup>th</sup> birthday until the first March 31 <sup>st</sup> after their 15 <sup>th</sup> birthday	Uniform amount of 10,000 yen

\*If the income of the person supporting the child is over the income limit, a uniform amount of 5,000 yen a month is given as a special benefit.

\**Third child and on* means the third child and subsequent children among children who have not reached the first March 31<sup>st</sup> after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and are being supported.

### (3) Payment period

As a rule, child allowances are paid every June, October, and February for the period until the end of the previous month.



#### Main rules for the child allowance system

- As a rule, allowances are paid for children living in Japan.
- If the parents are separated, for example for divorce by agreement proceedings, priority for the allowance is given to the parent who lives with the child.
- If the parents live outside of Japan and the child lives in Japan, they may designate someone else to be responsible for the child and that person will receive the allowance.
- If a guardian of a minor is supporting the child, that person will receive the allowance.
- If the child lives in an institution or with a foster parent, for example, as a rule, the administrator of the institution or the foster parent will receive the allowance.

\*For details, please visit your local municipal office (or workplace if you are a civil servant).

## 4. Parenting

### 4-1. Checkup of infants

Your municipality is obligated to provide health checkups for 18-month-olds and 3-year-olds. Health checkups are also given to children of other ages as needed, and it is recommended to take your child for checkups.

Checkups consist of tests of development, height and weight measurement, and parenting advice, for example. For details, please visit your local municipal office.

### 4-2. Vaccinations

There are some illnesses that can be immunized against with vaccinations.

Vaccinations include routine vaccinations recommended by the municipality and optional vaccinations available by request. Routine vaccinations are free in many municipalities while optional vaccinations are paid out-of-pocket.

Consult your doctor or other healthcare professional to decide on the order and schedule for vaccinations based on your child's health.

#### 4-3. Medical expenses for children

If you are enrolled in health insurance, you pay 20% of the medical expenses for children up to age six prior to the start of compulsory education.

Depending on your local municipality, medical expenses may be free until the end of elementary school or additional aid may be provided.

#### 4-4. Facilities for preschool-aged children

There are different types of facilities for children up to age six prior to the start of compulsory education, such as daycares, kindergartens, and centers for early childhood education. Visit your local municipal office for information on what types of facilities are available in your area.

As of October 2019, fees for daycares, kindergartens, centers for early childhood education, and other such facilities will be free for all children aged 3 to 5. Fees will also be free for children aged 0 to 2 in households that are exempt from resident tax.

##### (1) Daycare (*Hoikujo*)

These facilities care for children in lieu of parents and guardians who are unable to provide care at home for work or other reasons.

Regular daycare services are 8 hours a day and some daycares also offer after-hours evening and holiday daycare services. Some daycares offer hourly care services in which children can be left there on an hourly basis in the event of urgent business or a short-term part-time job, for example.

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##### Non-registered daycare facilities

This is the general term for facilities that care for babies and young children that have not been approved according to the Child Welfare Act or other laws or regulations.

There are places called *muninka hoikujo* and *takujijo* as well as so-called baby hotels where you can leave your child overnight. Babysitters who are not certified are also considered non-registered daycare facilities. There are also other types of daycares such as workplace daycare facilities at some companies or hospitals for the children of employees, temporary daycares for events, and daycares for customers at department stores.

Non-registered daycare facilities can be established freely by individuals or companies but must meet certain standards similar to registered daycare facilities.

The main differences with registered facilities are in establishment standards, objectives of the business, application method, fees, and management costs.

##### (3) Kindergarten (*Yochien*)

These are educational facilities for children from age three until they start elementary school. The standard duration for education is four hours a day, but extended care is available at some kindergartens for parents and guardians who are working. Unlike education from elementary school and on, kindergartens focus on self-directed play. They also offer parenting advice for parents and guardians in the local area and some places open their schoolyard to the public.

### (3) Center for early childhood education (*Nintei Kodomoen*)

Centers for early childhood education are kindergartens and daycares that meet certification standards and

- provide early childhood education and daycare services for preschool-aged children
- support parenting in the local area

They can be used regardless of whether parents/guardians work or are at home. They also have other functions for all households with children such as consultation activities to help with the anxiety of parenting and providing a place parents and children to get together.

### 4 -5. After school children's club (after-school care program)

These are programs with after-school care workers that offer a place for appropriate play and to spend time after classes end for the day for elementary school children whose parents or guardians are not at home during the daytime for work or other reasons. (In addition to after school children's clubs, some municipalities also offer after-school children's classes that include different types of learning and interactive activities using spare classrooms as school with participation from community residents. These are open to all elementary school students regardless of whether or not their parents or guardians are working.)

### 4-6. Family Support Center

Members are stay-at-home mothers and others who need assistance watching infants, elementary school students, or other children they are raising and people who want to provide assistance. Family Support Centers are organizations that act as a go-between to help members support each other.

Examples of support are taking children to and from daycare facilities, watching children after daycare facility hours or after school, or watching children while parents or guardians go out for grocery shopping or to run other errands.

Members register at the nearest local Family Support Center. When you register, a Family Support Center advisor introduces you to a member who will provide you with assistance and acts as a go-between for you and that person. When you are done using the service, you pay a fee to the person who provided assistance.