

Tokyo hospitals overwhelmed as virus cases hit new record

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Tokyo's hospitals are struggling to provide routine care because of a sharp spike in coronavirus cases, officials warned Thursday as new infections in the Japanese capital hit another record high.

The city raised its alert level for availability of medical services to the top of a four-tier COVID-19 warning system for the first time since it

was introduced.

Japan has so far avoided imposing strict lockdown measures and has seen a smaller outbreak than many other countries, with only around 187,000 infections and 2,700 deaths recorded overall.

But with cases on the rise, this week the [prime minister](#) urged citizens to reconsider holiday travel, and suspended a controversial domestic tourism campaign in an attempt to slow the spread of [infection](#).

Tokyo logged 822 new cases on Thursday—breaking its record for the second day running and marking a jump from around 600 per day in recent weeks.

"Providing both regular medical care and [coronavirus](#) care has become difficult because of the growing number of hospitalised patients," Masataka Inokuchi, vice president of the Tokyo Medical Association, said.

Governor Yuriko Koike called on residents to "continue avoiding non-essential outings".

Tokyo has two COVID-19 alert systems—the other is for the level of contagion, which was raised to the maximum level last month.

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