

All Japan Kendo Federation

June 4, 2020

Guidelines for Preventing the Spread of Infections with the Resumption of Interpersonal Keiko (Taijin-teki-keiko)

Introduction

The All Japan Kendo Federation (AJKF) has drawn up the “Guidelines for Preventing the Spread of Infections with the Resumption of Interpersonal Keiko (Taijin-teki-keiko)” (hereafter AJKF Guidelines) to go along with the lifting on June 10 of the request for self-restraint for interpersonal training in Japan.

Please resume *keiko* in accordance with these guidelines, while taking into account the fact that kendo training falls under the “three Cs” (closed spaces, crowded places, close-contact settings) and that spray from practitioners’ mouths can be the source of COVID-19 infection.

Additionally, using the AJKF Guidelines as a reference, each kendo organization and group should prepare guidelines appropriate to the circumstances in the region, member structure (age, gender, proficiency), and practice location. Please also devise plans for the period after the resumption of *keiko* according to the characteristics of your organization. Furthermore, the training plan should take into account concerns surrounding a second wave of COVID-19 infections and a decrease in physical fitness due to self-restraint.

The guidelines have been prepared with the cooperation of experts. However, there is not necessarily sufficient scientific knowledge to totally prevent infections of COVID-19. Therefore, please understand that these guidelines have been created based on findings obtained thus far. Also understand that the guidelines may be reviewed one by one, based on the gathering of data in the future and the status of infections in each region.

Guidelines

1. Conducting *keiko*

- Prefectural kendo federations will comply with prefectural policies when resuming *keiko* within the prefecture, and, when necessary, notify the prefectural sports bureau and the department of health and welfare.
- The person in charge will follow the AJKF Guidelines when making the decision to resume *keiko* with a firm understanding of the region. Consider posting the guidelines in dojos and sports centres.

2. Formulating guidelines and *keiko* plans

- Referring to the AJKF Guidelines, each organization and group will create its own guidelines depending on regional circumstances, member structure (age, gender, proficiency), training venue. These guidelines shall be posted in training venues such as dojo and distributed to members to ensure that they are thoroughly implemented.
- Each organization and group will create a training plan according to its particular situation. Pay attention to the following items when developing a plan:
 - ✓ In addition to concerns about a second wave of COVID-19 infections, it is possible that the physical condition of practitioners may have declined due the period of self-restraint. Therefore, please resume *keiko* carefully. In other words, draw up a basic plan that focuses on warming-up exercises, fitness, and *suburi*, and then gradually increase the training load. For example, the following plan could be implemented:
 - ✧ For the first ten days, two-thirds of *keiko* time (if the session is one hour, then 40 minutes) will be warming-up exercises, fitness, and *suburi*. Then for the final 20 minutes, put on *men* and do *keiko* as a group.
 - ✧ For the next ten days, half of *keiko* (if a one-hour session, then 30 minutes) will be warming-up exercises, fitness, and *suburi*. Then for the final 30 minutes, put on *men* and do *keiko* as a group.

- ✧ The twentieth day after resumption (in July), each organization and group should return to its normal *keiko* routine.
- ✧ As the membership structure of each organization and group varies, create a suitable plan for your needs.
- ✓ In case there are schoolchildren and students among your members, respect the “New School Lifestyle” directive that was implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology on May 22, 2020.

“New School Lifestyle” Summary

As “learning activities in which the risk of infection is high even with taking preventative measures”, physical education and health education have been deemed to be “activities in which students become crowded” (★) and “come into close contact” (★). (Items marked with ★ are designated to be especially high risk.)

These activities have three levels:

Level 3: “The risk of infection is high even when taking preventative measures.”

Do not do.

Level 2: In these activities, children will “come into contact”, “become crowded”, “do activities at a close distance”, “face each other and vocalize”. They should be avoided if possible, or done by keeping a set distance between each other, facing in the same direction, or reducing the number of times or length of time undertaken. In that case, activities marked with a ★ have an especially high risk, so doing them should be carefully considered.

Level 1: “The risk of infection is high even with taking preventative measures.”

Take preventative measures as much as possible and consider carrying out.

The classifications above were decided by consultation between the boards of education and municipal health bureaus.

- ✓ If the policy of the prefectural or municipal board of education where the organization or group is located is not known, contact the committee or authorities.

3. Participating in *keiko*

- People with underlying conditions should not participate in *keiko*.
 - ✧ Underlying conditions refers to people with diabetes, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), undergoing dialysis, etc.
 - ✧ If people with these conditions intend to participate in *keiko*, consent from a doctor should be obtained beforehand.
- People who meet the following conditions cannot participate in *keiko*:
 - ✓ If you are not feeling well.
 - ✧ If you have symptoms such as a fever, cough, sore throat.
 - ✧ You may be infected but asymptomatic, so if you feel your condition is different than normal, consider carefully whether to participate in *keiko*.
 - ✓ If a family member living with you or a close acquaintance is suspected of being infected.
 - ✓ People who within the last 14 days have travelled to or had close contact with a person from a country or region that is restricted by the government, or after entry have had to undergo a period of observation.
 - ✓ Non-members of your organization, for the time being.
- People who participate in *keiko* must wear a mask to prevent infection when travelling between their home and place of practice.

Notes for Elderly Practitioners

If elderly people are infected with COVID-19, they are more likely to become seriously ill, and the mortality rate is high.

Information provided by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare states: “It has also been reported that there is a higher risk of becoming seriously ill, especially for the elderly and those with underlying conditions.

*The mortality rate differs with age: 6% for people over 60; 0.2% for those under 30. (Reported in China)

Therefore, more so than younger people, it is necessary for the elderly (for example, those over 60) to be cautious about resuming *keiko*. Please consider resuming from July.

4. Before *keiko* starts

- Take your temperature before training and do not participate if you have a fever.
 - ◇ If you do not have a fever but have a cough and/or sore throat, do not participate.
- Before *keiko* wash the hands, gargle and use alcohol to disinfect the fingers.
- Take a register of participants names, contact numbers, etc. at each *keiko*.
- Change into training wear at home or use the changing room in shifts to avoid it becoming crowded.
- Clean and disinfect the floor.

5. At *keiko*

- As a rule, when doing warming-up exercises, *suburi*, etc., do so in one line with everyone facing the same way, not facing each other. If practitioners must face each other, or make more than two rows, they should be at a distance of approximately 2m apart. Refrain from vocalizing (*hassei*) as much as possible.
- To stop droplets spraying from practitioners' mouths during *keiko*, please take the following measures.
 - ✓ To prevent droplets spraying onto the opponent, wear a mask (hereafter, "Men-mask").
 - ◇ So that the Men-mask does not restrict breathing, it is preferable that the material is breathable and that it is not tied around the chin so that air can escape sideways and downwards. Please avoid wearing tight-fitting medical masks.

- ✧ It is possible to attach a strap to a *tenugui* which is then tied around the back of the head while covering the nose. (In this case, it is not tied around the chin, ensure that air can pass on the lower part and the sides.) To see an example of a Men-mask made from a *tenugui*, please see the attachment. (An application to register its design is pending.)
- <Attachment 1>

It is highly recommended to use a shield to block spray from an opponent during *keiko*. Practitioners aged 60 or over should use one.

- ✧ The shield should be big enough to cover the eyes, nose, and mouth, be made from a material such as polycarbonate laminate, and affixed to the inside of the *men-gane*.
- ✧ As long as the shield covers the eyes, nose, and mouth, it can be made from one or multiple pieces.
- ✧ To see an example of a shield, please see the photographs in the attachment.

<Attachment 2>

- ✧ In addition, to prevent heat stroke when training with these pieces of equipment, shorten *keiko* time, hydrate frequently, and always keep in mind the temperature in the gymnasium or dojo.

Supplementary Notes

- The AJKF conducted tests related to mitigating spray from the mouth. The results:
 1. The Men-mask stopped close to 90% of droplets being sprayed.
 2. The Men-mask in combination with any type of shield stopped about 95% of droplets being sprayed.
 3. Using only a shield was about 70% effective.
- From these results, the AJKF decided that the Men-mask as described above is necessary in order to mitigate infections of COVID-19.
- On the other hand, the shield was found to be about 70% effective in stopping spray. When combined with a Men-mask, this rose to about 95%.

Considering that they also stop spray coming from an opponent, it is strongly recommended to use a Men-mask and shield simultaneously.

- COVID-19 is “easy to spread, easy to be infected”. Especially for elderly practitioners, it is important to take measures to prevent infection. A shield should be used because it blocks droplets from the opponent.
 - In this test, droplet spray measured 1 to 2m, but it was found that small particles can float. For this reason, frequent ventilation and blowing air through the dojo is extremely important. (It is also important as a countermeasure for heatstroke.) At the same time, it is also necessary to maintain a distance from others.
 - Using a Men-mask and a shield is an interim measure until COVID-19 infections have completely finished. The AJKF would also like practitioners to take other steps, such as shortening *keiko* time as described above, in combination with using protective equipment. The AJKF will continue to conduct surveys to ascertain safety practices.
- In order to avoid crowded places (one of the “three Cs”), comply with the following matters.
- ✓ Do *keiko* with an appropriate number of people and avoid crowding.
 - ✓ When doing *keiko*, the distance between *motodachi* should be 2m or more. As a result, the number of people that can do *keiko* at the same time shall be set with this distance in mind.
 - ◇ Mark *motodachi*'s position with tape on the floor at 2m intervals.
 - ✓ Consider holding *keiko* in two groups to avoid becoming crowded.
 - ✓ Avoid contact with other people Together with wearing a mask when taking a break.
 - ✓ As a rule, do not let people in the dojo or gymnasium to watch *keiko*.
 - ✓ Parents should wait outside if there is not enough space in the dojo or gymnasium.
- To prevent the spraying of droplets from the mouth, please take note of the following points.

- ✓ Refrain from vocalizing (*hassei*) as much as possible during *keiko*.
- ✓ Refrain from doing *tsubazeriai*. If you unavoidably end up in *tsubazeriai*, quickly separate or do *hiki-waza*, but do not vocalize (*hassei*).
- To reduce the risk of infection, aim to make *keiko* about one hour. For about five minutes every 30 minutes, open and close the windows or use a fan to ventilate the dojo.

6. After *keiko*

- When *keiko* has finished, keep a distance of at least 2m from your sensei, *senpai*, etc. when doing *rei*.
- When *keiko* has finished, put the Men-mask in a plastic bag to take home. Wash and disinfect.
- After *keiko*, disinfect your *kendo-gu* (especially *men* and *kote*) and shield with alcohol spray.
- After every *keiko* it is recommended that the *kendo-gi*, *hakama*, *tenugui*, and *shinai* are taken home, washed and disinfected.
- After *keiko* wash your hands, gargle, and use alcohol to disinfect fingers.

7. If an infection is confirmed

- If a *keiko* participant develops a COVID-19 infection, they must immediately inform the person in charge of the organization or group.

8. Other

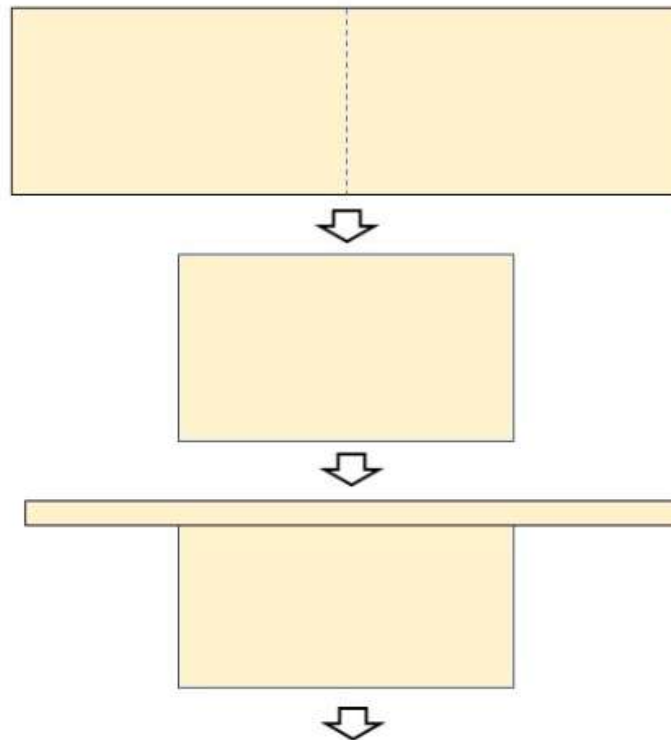
- Do not share *kendo-gu*, *shinai*, *tenugui*, towel and other equipment.
- Before and after *keiko* disinfect shared equipment with alcohol (eg. *uchikomi-dai*, *taiko* drumsticks); dojo, gymnasium, changing room, shower room entrance and exit door handles; window locks and screens; and other places that people touch.
- Exchanges between different groups and *de-geiko* are prohibited for the time being.
- Even before and after *keiko*, the AJKF would like practitioners to follow the “New Lifestyle” guidance from the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare, especially if going out to eat after *keiko* with other members. In such cases, this means “do not

share food from a big plate; order your own food”, “do not sit opposite each other; sit side-by-side in a line”, “talk quietly”, and “do not pour drinks for each other or drink from the same cup”.

Example of a “Men-mask”



Air escapes downwards and sideways



Use a *tenugui*.

Fold the *tenugui* in half.

Attach a strap to the top edge of the *tenugui*.
The length of the strap should be the same length as a *tenugui*.
(The strap can be made from a piece of old *tenugui*.)

Wrap it around the face and tie the strap securely behind the head.

With this method, breath can escape from the Men-mask downwards and sideways. Practitioners should not have difficulty breathing and water droplets sprayed from the mouth will be absorbed by the *tenugui*. Once *keiko* has finished, quickly remove the Men-mask and put in a plastic bag. If you do not touch it until it is washed, this should prevent infections.

Example of a shield

Eye and
mouth
shield
combined



Separate
eye and
mouth
shields



The shield should be situated to cover the “*monomi*” area in front of the eyes and the mouth. The shield used in this test was a combined version.

All Japan Kendo Federation

June 8, 2020

Supplemental Explanations for the Guidelines

On June 4, 2020, the All Japan Kendo Federation (AJKF) published “Guidelines for Preventing the Spread of Infections with the Resumption of Interpersonal Keiko (Taijin-teki-keiko)” (hereafter, AJKF Guidelines). Since then we have had several questions related to it which will be explained below.

Question 1: Does the Men-mask make breathing difficult?

It is stifling but its main purpose is to prevent clusters of infection forming through droplets being sprayed from practitioners’ mouths during kendo *keiko*. When wearing the Men-mask, there is a small opening between the mask and the mouth which makes it less stuffy. (When viewed from the side you can see it is not flat but three-dimensional.) When wearing the *men*, it is hard for air to escape around the chin/jaw area. Instead it will escape from the top of the Men-mask. Please pay attention to this when wearing the Men-mask.

When it is hot, sweat will make the Men-mask wet. Please be careful as this can make it difficult for air to escape.

Keeping in mind the points covered above, it is recommended that you do not do *keiko* for a long time but do instead for short intervals allowing the *men* to be repeatedly taken off.

The AJKF is planning to review the guidelines again. As part of this process additional tests will be conducted in the near future. We will make public the results when they are ready.

Question 2: Is holding a tournament in violation of the prohibition of *keiko* in the guidelines?

Interactions and *de-geiko* between different groups are prohibited at present with the aim of trying to control people meeting those from outside their group, as well as strangers, to prevent an increased risk of infection. The intention is not to prohibit tournaments organized by prefectural and municipal boards of education and prefectural kendo federations. However, when it comes to holding tournaments, please use the AJKF Guidelines as a reference to try and prevent infections as much as possible.

Question 3: What about iaido and jodo?

In both iaido and jodo *keiko*, please wear a Men-mask and keep an appropriate distance from each other.

Guidelines for iaido and jodo are planned to be published soon.