



Allergies

(Ehime Shimbun: February 20, 2026)

It has become the high season for hay fever. This spring, the amount of cypress and cedar pollen in Ehime prefecture will be 1.48 times higher than the average over the past 10 years. I'm worried about that, so I've started taking medicine earlier than usual, learning from my experience last year.

February 20th has been designated as Allergy Day by the Japan Allergy Foundation. On this day 60 years ago, immunologists Mr. Ishizaka Kiminari and Mrs. Teruko Ishizaka discovered the "Immunoglobulin E antibody", which causes allergic symptoms. It led to the eventual treatment for allergies like hay fever, which is now designated as a disease affecting the entire nation.

According to the foundation, more than half of the population suffers from some kind of allergic disease. In addition to hay fever, there is atopic dermatitis, bronchial asthma and food allergies.

During the Great East Japan Earthquake, many patients suffered as evacuation shelters didn't stock appropriate foods and the ingredients of such foods were unknown. Last year, in response to this kind of problem, a joint-venture organization in Kuroshio-cho, Kochi prefecture worked with a local company in the area to develop an emergency canned food that avoids 28 potentially allergy-causing ingredients. The canned food is a dry curry made with bonito. It is labeled with the product's name, "Nigeru" (meaning "escape" in English) in



large letters, along with an image of a running person. Kuroshio-cho could face a tsunami up to 34 meters high if the predicted Nankai Trough earthquake strikes. The pictogram was drawn with

the hope that everyday people would consciously think about evacuating when necessary.

Ehime prefecture announced new damage estimates for a Nankai Trough earthquake. According to the report, there could be as many as 12,750 deaths. A tsunami could claim the lives of 9,313 people, the highest figure among causes. The most important thing is to evacuate early. We should constantly think over our disaster preparedness to protect our lives.



ONE POINT JAPANESE

「～ては いられない」の 使い方

(How to use "I can't --")

A : ああ、疲れた。ちょっと 休憩 しませんか？

Ā, tsukareta. Chotto kyūkei shimasen ka?

(Ah, I'm tired. Want to take a little break?)



B : 明日の 会議の 資料が、まだ できて ないんです。

Ashita no kaigi no shiryō ga, mada dekite naindesu.

(I haven't finished preparing tomorrow's meeting materials yet.)

コピーも しなきゃ ならないし、休んでは いられません。

Kopī mo shinakya naranai shi, yasunde wa iraremasen.

(I have to make copies too, there's no way I can take a break.)

A : わたしも 手伝いますよ。

Watashi mo tetsudaimasu yo.

(I'll give you a hand.)



コーヒーを 飲んで リラックスしてから、がんばりましょう。

Kōhī o nonde rirakkusu shite kara, gambarimashō.

(Let's work on it after a little coffee break.)

A : 20 分以上 並んで 待ってるけど、全然 順番が 来ないね。

Nijippun ijō narande matteru kedo, zenzen junban ga konai ne.

(We've been waiting in line for more than twenty minutes, and our seat still hasn't come.)

B : 行列が できる 人気の ラーメン屋だからね。

Gyōretsu ga dekiru ninki no rāmenya dakara ne.

(Yeah, this is a popular ramen shop that always has a long line.)



A : でも、昼休みは 1 時間しか ないし、待っては いられないよ。

Demo, hiruyasumi wa ichijikan shika naishi, matte wa irarenai yo.

(But our lunch break is only one hour, so we can't wait that long.)

B : 今日は あきらめて、休みの 日に もう 一度 来て みようか。

Kyō wa akiramete, yasumi no hi ni mō ichido kite miyō ka.

(Shall we give up today and come again on our day off?)

A : 試験まで あと 2 か月。のんびり しては いられない！

Shiken made ato nikagetsu. Nonbiri shite wa irarenai!

(I have only two months before the test, so I can't be lying around.)

< by Niihama Nihongo no Kai >

NNK also provides Japanese lessons for foreigners living in Niihama.

Feel free to contact us at:

Niihama Kokusai Kōryū Kyōkai (Niihama International Center)

Tel:0897-65-1579 E-mail:niihamashikokusai@gmail.com

What's New?

Niihama City

No.367 April 2026

Published by SGG Niihama



Japan's Other Shrinking Population

Hannah Melnyk

Japan's declining population remains one of the country's most discussed long-term challenges. Birth rates, ageing demographics, workforce shortages: the data is endlessly analysed.

But in recent weeks, another demographic crisis has stirred anxiety online: the apparent disappearance of drummers.

ドラマー不足 (drummer shortage) has been doing the rounds online and many people have been wading in with their opinions. Arguments mainly fall into two camps: a population shortage and a practical shortage.

On the practical side, drums are louder, bulkier and costlier than other instruments. Practising at home is difficult, meaning studio time (and studio fees) quickly become part of the equation. Combined with being more physically demanding, this creates a higher barrier for people starting out or trying to raise their skill set, compared to, for example, picking up a guitar in your bedroom.

Another popular theory is that the increasing complexity of drum parts and a trend towards faster tempos has increased demand for highly skilled drummers. This greatly reduces the pool of qualified drummers a band has to choose from. In recent years, seasoned musicians have been known to sometimes deliberately choose inexperienced players to join a band so that they can help grow their skills. Whilst generous in theory, this can backfire as there is great

pressure to reach a high standard quickly which leads to members quitting as things get tougher and tougher, and can lead to drama. Yet this raises a question: has music only recently become that complex, or have expectations increased?

One drummer, Makoto, who is ironically without a band at the moment and has vetoed the idea of support drumming, issued a long statement on the subject. He suggested there is no population shortage and the issue is felt by non-drummers rather than drummers themselves. He argues that more drummers are leaving bands and drifting towards support drumming, mainly due to shorter commitments, having a paid fee and clearer boundaries.

Whether the problem is being caused by a low population, or practical problems such as suitability, economics, or simply people wanting to keep drumming a hobby, there is a larger risk with a dwindling supply of drummers. If drummers become harder to find, live music may adapt without them.

This concern was summed up neatly by my three-year-old daughter's favourite musician, a drummer called Naoki. (Closely followed by a bass player who she loves because he's from Ehime.) Naoki is an active drummer who is currently support drumming with a couple of other light projects on the go. He also made a short thought-provoking comment. Roughly translated, he said "... it's not great to use drummers for everything and synchronise everything to backing tracks just because it's a convenient world these days. It feels unnatural when you're watching a live show."

Whilst it may seem trivial, he has a point. Would a live show feel the same if there was no drummer, just a recorded track? A recorded track is never late, never tired, never speeds up too much. No more encore shouts of “な・お・き! な・お・き!”

But it also never breathes.

If there is a drummer shortage, perhaps it isn't simply about numbers. It may be about how much space we are willing to leave for imperfection, for the human pulse that makes live music feel alive in the first place.



Wear Eyeglasses during Hay Fever Season

(Ehime Shimbun Column, February 13, 2026)

When cedar or cypress pollen begins to spread, allergic conjunctivitis frequently occurs, causing itchiness or congestion of the eyes. An important countermeasure is to prevent the invasion of allergy causative substances into the eyes as much as possible. People who usually use contact lenses must change to eyeglasses to protect their eyes from pollen.



The symptoms may worsen if contact lenses are soiled with pollen. People who have a hard time with allergies every year should consult their oculist for measures. If you continue to use contact lenses, disposable lenses that are changed daily are recommended.

“Cho-Ou-Saja 2026”

(Niihama Monthly City News, February 2026)

Mizuki Nana, a well-known singer and voice actor originally from Niihama, Ehime and first Niihama tourism ambassador, released her fourth compilation album, “THE MUSEUM IV” on Wednesday, January 21st. In May 2025, Niihama City sent Taikodai drum floats to the Osaka-Kansai Expo, where she performed the song “Cho-Ou-Saja.” This event led her to create “Cho-Ou-Saja 2026,” and the song was included on her greatest hits album.



Mizuki Nana's Message:



“Thanks to the stage of the Osaka-Kansai Expo, I had the opportunity to cover this song. I was thrilled with joy and gratitude to cover the song. This is the complete version up to verse eight. I sang this song with a sense of excitement of the Taiko festival that has been ingrained in me since I was a little child. I put all my love for my hometown into this performance. I would be happy if you enjoy listening to this song.”

This newsletter is published by SGG, a volunteer group that helps foreigners living in and around Niihama. If you need any advice, information, or support, please contact SGG. SGG would welcome any suggestions, questions, or ideas for monthly articles.

email: yukiko-m@shikoku.ne.jp hayatine@nbn.ne.jp

* This month's editors are Naomi Negoro & .michiko Hada

April Events

Koi-nobori Carp Streamers Event

Date: From April 1st (Wed)~May 31st (Sun)

Place: Marine Park Niihama

Closed every Tuesday and on May 7th (open on May 5th)

Possibility of cancellation in the event of strong winds or rain

Contact: Marine Park Niihama

Tel: 0897-46-4100

The 59th Niihama Spring Cultural Festival

Date: From April 10th (Fri)~19th (Sun)

1. Art Exhibition at Akagane Museum

2. Entertainment program at Niihama Cultural Center

Grand Hall * Free admission

Contact: Cultural Promotion Division (Bunka Shinko Ka)

Tel: 0897-65-1554

Online Information in English from Niihama City

☆ A Guide for Living in Niihama



☆ The Niihama Medical Institution Map



Trash & Garbage Sorting Information

☆ What's New? in English



☆ Niihama Tourist Information

<https://niihama.info/>



☆ Help with legal matters, discrimination, insurance, etc.
Japan Life Guide

(Nationwide service) multilingual



☆ Yorisoi Helpline for foreigners

[TEL:0120-279-338](tel:0120-279-338) 10:00 am~10:00 pm

Multilingual Your privacy will be protected.

