

**Okaya International Center** 394-8510 Nagano-ken Okaya-shi Sawai-cho 8-1 [TEL:(0266)24-3226](tel:(0266)24-3226) FAX：(0266)24-3229

E-mail:oiea@oiea.jp [URL:www.oiea.jp](file:///C:\Users\CIR\Desktop\Oieacir\共有\ニューズレター\25.4.15月号\www.oiea.jp)

**Winter Edition January 2015（英語）**



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This newsletter is distributed four times a year by the Okaya International Center,

with the aim of providing local foreign residents with information necessary for daily life, as well as insight into aspects of Japanese culture.　Please feel free to contact us with your feedback or any questions you may have.



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Water pipes and cold weather do not go well together. When the temperature gets into minus figures, pipes freeze and run the risk of bursting. Taking such measures as fitting an anti-freeze pipe heater is necessary to protect your pipes.

Pipes buried underground and those indoors in a heated setting are unlikely to freeze, but pipes elsewhere are susceptible to freezing. Outdoor pipes directly exposed to wind, north-facing pipes frequently in shade, and uncovered pipes are particularly susceptible and should be protected from the cold.

**If they do freeze...**

...place a towel over the frozen area and slowly pour warm water over the towel to heat the area up.

\*Please be aware that pouring boiling water over pipes and taps can cause them to burst.

In the event of burst pipes, you should immediately turn off the stop cock or wrap cloth and tape around the burst and quickly call a pipe repair specialist.

Details for on-call pipe repair specialists can be found on the calendar page of Koho Okaya, the city magazine, and on the city homepage. <http://www.city.okaya.lg.jp/>

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**Use small steps**

When walking with large steps, you have to raise your legs further off the ground. This causes larger shifts in your center of gravity and makes it easier to lose your balance and slip. As a rule of thumb, always use small steps when walking on icy surfaces.

**Walk carefully with the soles of your feet coming into complete contact with the ground**

Move your center of gravity forward slightly and walk so that the soles of your feet come into complete contact with the ground. Walking in this way with small steps, almost in a sort of shuffle, is an effective way to walk on icy patches. On snow, walk in a similar way but refrain from shuffling. It is also necessary to take care when quickening or slowing your pace and when starting to walk from a standstill, as it can be easy to lose your balance on these occasions.



Avoid sudden applications of the throttle, brakes and steering!

Despite knowing the dangers of driving on snow and ice, we often tend to drive as we would in normal conditions. Sudden acceleration, braking, steering, and set-off from a standstill are all very dangerous and can cause a car to slip. At stop lines where repeated braking and acceleration occurs, the road surface can be particularly slippery, so it is important to aim to stop a little before stop line markings. If there is a car stopped in front of you, don't forget to leave plenty of distance between you and the car in front when stopping.

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**Q**: What is Ebola?

Ebola is an infectious disease caused by the Ebola virus. Following an incubation period of 2-21 days (7-10 days in most people), people infected with the virus experience initial symptoms such as a sudden fever, headache, lethargy, muscle ache, and a sore throat, before more serious symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, chest pains, and hemorrhaging develop. At present there is no specific cure or vaccine for Ebola, so treatment is purely symptomatic.

**Q**: How is Ebola contracted?

The virus is contracted through unprotected exposure to the bodily fluids (blood, secretions, vomit, feces,)or items contaminated by the bodily fluids (syringes etc.) of a person exhibiting the symptoms of Ebola. The virus makes its way into the body through open cuts and wounds, and mucous membranes. In general, the virus cannot be contracted from a person not exhibiting symptoms. Nor is it an airborne virus.

Also, in areas where the disease is widespread, there have been cases where people that have handled the carcasses of infected wild animals and raw meat from such animals have contracted Ebola suggesting that the disease has been introduced to human society through nature. According to the WHO, those groups most at risk of infection in infected areas are:

* Medical workers
* Family members of Ebola patients
* Close relatives and mourners that may have touched the body of deceased Ebola victims as part of funeral rites

Unlike the flu, Ebola is not a disease that is easily transmitted between people, nor can it be caught by coughs and sneezes. By educating yourself about the disease and taking appropriate preventative measures, you can protect yourself against Ebola.

**Q**: What areas are affected by Ebola?

Frequent outbreaks have been confirmed in the countries of Central Africa (Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Uganda, Gabon etc.)since the 1970s. However this is the first time that outbreaks in Western Africa and continents other than Africa (Spain, America) have been confirmed.

**Q**: Is it safe to travel to African countries with reported outbreaks of Ebola?

Is it safe to travel to African countries with reported outbreaks of Ebola?

Nonessential and nonurgent travel should be avoided. Should travel be absolutely essential, please check and follow the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In infected areas, it is important to carry out good hygiene practices (washing hands, avoiding contact with animals and the sick, etc.) in order to avoid contracting Ebola and other infectious diseases.

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**Q**: What is the difference between the flu and a regular cold?

Generally speaking, colds are caused by all kinds of different viruses and mainly cause symptoms such as a sore throat, runny nose, and coughs and sneezes. It is rare for them to cause symptoms that affect the whole body. Fevers that come with colds aren't as high as with the flu and don't usually increase in severity. On the other hand, the flu is caused by influenza viruses. In addition to the symptoms seen with colds, the flu causes fevers over 38℃ and symptoms that affect the whole body such as headaches, muscle ache, and joint pain. In children, although rare, the flu can cause brain swelling and damage, and in old people and those with lowered immune systems, it can cause pneumonia and become quite serious.

**Q**: How do you catch the flu?

The flu is airborne and mainly transmitted via small droplets containing the influenza virus which are released into the air when people with the flu cough and sneeze. it is said that 2 million of these are released when someone sneezes and 100, 000 upon coughing. These particles are capable of invading the respiratory systems of surrounding people within a distance of 1 - 1.5m.

Also, it is said that these particles can invade the body through mucous membranes such as the eye.

**Q**: What can I do to avoid getting the flu?

1. Get a flu jab. This reduces your chance of getting sick upon infection, and reduces the severity of symptoms should they occur.

2. Wash hands and gargle after returning home. Wash your hands with soap and running water to eliminate the influenza virus which may be present on your hands. Using an alcohol-based disinfectant is also an effective way to do this.

3. Maintain an appropriate level of humidity. When the air becomes dry, the mucous membrane of throat loses some of its protective ability to defend against viruses making it easier to catch the flu. An effective way to avoid this is to use a humidifier at home, keeping the level of humidity between 50-60%

4. Rest and maintain a balanced and nutritional diet: In order to keep your body's defences working well, it is important to maintain a balanced diet and regularly get enough rest.

5. Avoid crowded areas: Avoid crowded and downtown areas, and wear a mask when going out.

**Q**: How long should I avoid going out after catching the flu?

Generally speaking, our bodies emit the virus from between 3 - 7 days after symptoms occur. As fever subsides, the amount of the virus that we emit decreases, but our bodies do continue to emit the virus even after our temperature is back to normal. How long to avoid going out really depends on the individual, but if you do leave the house while symptoms such as a cough and sneezing persist, make sure to wear a mask.

＊If you feel unwell out of hours, visit the designated out-of-hours clinic. Information on out-of-hours services can be found in Koho Okaya or on the city homepage. <http://www.city.okaya.lg.jp/>

These clinics usually provide consultation between 9am and 5pm (You should however call before visiting in the afternoon)

＊Children's evening emergency medical center: 365 days a year 7 - 9pm. Tel: 0266-54-4699

＊Adult evening emergency medical center: Mon - Fri 7 - 9pm (You must call to register before visiting) Tel: 0266-23-8000

Useful Website: Nagano Medical Info Net [www.qq.pref.nagano.lg.jp](http://www.qq.pref.nagano.lg.jp)

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When talking of vegetables that warm the body, it is important not to forget ginger and green onions (negi). The white part of green onions contains a substance called allicin which improves circulation and warms the body. The green part contains carotene and vitamin c which both help prevent us from catching colds. In ginger, the spicy substances zingerone and shogaol promote perspiration, stop us from feeling too cold, and relieve the initial symptoms of colds. Although both ginger and green onions are not favorites for children, finely chop or grate them and add them to your dishes to help survive the cold this winter.

The main winter vegetables that help warm up the body are root vegetables such as carrots, Japanese radish, potatoes, and onions. Vitamin E which is generally found in large quantities in winter vegetables helps improve circulation, and vitamin C improves the absorption of iron, which is the main component of blood, and helps keep the capillary vessels in good working order. Such nutritional properties possessed by winter vegetables help the body keep its core temperature up preventing us from becoming too cold.

Vegetables such as satoimo and nagaimo that have a slimy texture contain mucins which are also good for the body. In addition to raising body temperature, they contain a substance that protects mucous membranes and strengthens our immune system. These properties make such vegetables indispensible winter vegetables. And it's not just winter vegetables we should focus on. Grains, beans, and fruit also contain large quantities of both vitamins C and E, so try incorporating these into your diet too!

Ingredients

Japanese radish 200ｇ (cut into small pieces)

Carrot 200ｇ (cut into small pieces)

Burdock 100ｇ (thinly sliced)

Pork 200ｇ (cut into small pieces)

1 chopped green onion

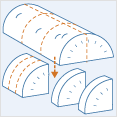
Miso 120 - 150ｇ

Sugar (to taste)

Water 2l

Radish Green Onion





Feel free to add any other vegetables you have in your fridge



1. Put the water and vegetables in a saucepan and bring to the boil.
2. Add half of the miso before the vegetables cook completely.
3. Add the pork and allow to cook.
4. Add the remaining miso and sugar to your required taste.