

Announcing World Patient Safety Day 2024

World Patient Safety Day, one of [WHO's global public health days](#), carries forward its mission into 2024. Established in 2019 by the Seventy-second World Health Assembly through the adoption of resolution [WHA72.6 – “Global action on patient safety”](#) and observed annually on 17 September, World Patient Safety Day is the cornerstone of action to promote global health and safety. It is firmly grounded in the fundamental principle of medicine – “first do no harm”. Its objectives are to increase public awareness and engagement, enhance global understanding, and work towards global solidarity and action by Member States to promote patient safety. Each year, a new theme is selected for World Patient Safety Day to highlight a priority patient safety area needing urgent and concerted action.

Recognizing the critical importance of correct and timely diagnoses in ensuring patient safety, “**Improving diagnosis for patient safety**” has been selected as the theme for World Patient Safety Day 2024. Resolution WHA72.6 and the [Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030](#) highlight the need for ensuring the safety of diagnostic processes. The global action plan encourages countries to adopt strategies that reduce diagnostic errors, which often arise from a combination of cognitive and system factors that impact the recognition of patients’ key signs and symptoms, and the interpretation and communication of their test results. A diagnostic error is the failure to establish a correct and timely explanation of a patient’s health problem, which can include delayed, incorrect, or missed diagnoses, or a failure to communicate that explanation to the patient. The magnitude of diagnostic errors is profound, accounting for nearly 16% of preventable harm across health systems. With most adults likely to face at least one diagnostic error in their lifetime, substantial work needs to be done to improve the safety of diagnostic processes.

Through the slogan “**Get it right, make it safe!**”, WHO calls for concerted efforts to significantly reduce diagnostic errors through multifaceted interventions rooted in systems thinking, human factors and active engagement of patients, their families, health workers and health care leaders. These interventions include but are not limited to ascertaining complete patient history, undertaking thorough clinical examination, improving access to diagnostic tests, implementing methods to measure and learn from diagnostic errors, and adopting technology-based solutions.

Objectives of World Patient Safety Day 2024

1. Raise global awareness of errors in diagnosis contributing to patient harm and emphasize the pivotal role of correct, timely and safe diagnosis in improving patient safety.
2. Give prominence to diagnostic safety in patient safety policy and clinical practice at all levels of health care, aligned with the Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030.
3. Foster collaboration among policy-makers, health care leaders, health workers, patient organizations, and other stakeholders in advancing correct, timely and safe diagnosis.
4. Empower patients and families to actively engage with health workers and health care leaders to improve diagnostic processes.

Working together to make health care safer

World Patient Safety Day 2024 proposes a wide range of activities, such as national campaigns, social media activities, advocacy and technical events, to be organized on and around 17 September. The signature mark of the campaign – lighting up iconic monuments, landmarks and public places in the colour orange – will continue. WHO invites all stakeholders to join the global campaign, light up the world in orange on 17 September, and take concrete steps towards the realization of diagnostic safety.

For more information about the campaign and proposed activities, please visit the WHO [World Patient Safety Day 2024 event page](#) and [WHO Patient Safety Website](#).

For further inquiries, contact us at patientsafety@who.int.