

Announcing World Patient Safety Day 2026 – Safe care for noncommunicable diseases

World Patient Safety Day, observed annually on 17 September, is an official [WHO global public health day](#). It was established in 2019 through World Health Assembly resolution [WHA72.6 for “Global action on patient safety”](#). The day aims to increase global awareness of patient safety, engage stakeholders and drive action to reduce avoidable harm in health care. Each year, a new theme highlights a priority area requiring action.

People living with noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) face a heightened risk of preventable harm in health care. Harm may arise from multiple sources such as diagnostic delays, medication errors, health care-associated infections and unsafe use of medical devices. These risks are amplified by the long-term nature of NCDs, their complex management and related vulnerabilities. They are also influenced by health system challenges, such as barriers to accessing care, or fragmented and poorly coordinated care. Determinants of health, including poverty, limited health literacy, stigma and discrimination, as well as harmful environmental exposures, further increase the likelihood of harm. Noncommunicable diseases affect billions of people worldwide and account for around 43 million deaths annually, with the majority occurring in low- and middle-income countries.

Given these challenges and the substantial global burden of NCDs, **‘Safe care for noncommunicable diseases’** has been selected as the theme for World Patient Safety Day 2026. As NCDs require long-term management, safe care across prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment (including self-care), rehabilitation and palliative care is essential – all part of a primary health care-oriented health system. Under the slogan **‘Safe care for life!’**, the campaign highlights the importance of preventing harm across the continuum of NCD care and in preserving life and the quality of people’s lives.

Noncommunicable diseases are a major global health priority, reflected in the [WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013–2020](#) (extended to 2030 by [Decision WHA72\(11\)](#) in 2019 to align it with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) and the commitments set out in the [2025 United Nations General Assembly Political Declaration on NCDs and Mental Health](#), in which the provision of safe care has been identified as a critical component needed to improve health outcomes. The [Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030](#) further emphasizes the importance of establishing strategic cooperation between patient safety and NCD programmes. World Patient Safety Day 2026 therefore aligns with these priorities and supports efforts to advance safe NCD care. The campaign is being developed in collaboration with people living with NCDs and health workers to ensure it is grounded in people’s experiences and the realities of care.

Objectives of World Patient Safety Day 2026

- Raise global awareness of patient safety challenges associated with NCDs across the continuum of care through a primary health care approach while considering disease-related factors, health system challenges and determinants of health that may increase the risk of harm.
- Promote the meaningful engagement of people living with NCDs and communities, in identifying safety risks and co-developing solutions with health practitioners, organizational leaders and policy-makers.
- Encourage stakeholders to integrate patient safety principles across NCD-related legislation, policies, strategies and programmes, with an emphasis on strengthening PHC-oriented health systems.
- Support health workers in strengthening patient safety practices such as safer diagnosis, medication safety and meaningful patient engagement.

Working together to make health care safer

World Patient Safety Day 2026 encompasses a wide range of activities to be organized on and around 17 September. The campaign's signature feature remains the illumination, in the colour orange, of iconic monuments, landmarks and public places around the world. WHO encourages all stakeholders to join the global campaign, and organize events, implement activities and light up the world in orange on the day!

For more details, visit the [World Patient Safety Day 2026 event page](#) and [WHO Patient Safety website](#).

For further enquiries, please contact: patientsafety@who.int.