

# Africa diabetes cases to soar: WHO

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Africa is set to see diabetes cases more than double to 55 million by 2045, the biggest increase across the globe, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned Thursday.

"The COVID-19 pandemic will eventually subside, but Africa is

projected in the coming years to experience the highest increase in [diabetes](#) globally," said Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa.

Twenty-four million people are living with diabetes today in Africa, which is also the region with the "highest number of people who do not know their diagnosis," the WHO statement said.

"An estimated 70 percent of people with diabetes do not know they have the disease."

Poor diet and increasingly [sedentary lifestyles](#) are blamed for the particularly high level of type two diabetes on the continent, which WHO called a "silent killer".

A study of 13 African countries, WHO said, revealed [death rates](#) from COVID-19 infections are significantly higher in patients with diabetes—10.2 percent, compared with 2.5 percent for COVID-19 patients overall.

People with diabetes in countries around the world have been prioritised for COVID jabs, WHO noted, while in Africa access to vaccines remains poor.

Only 6.6 percent of the African population is fully vaccinated against COVID, compared with about 40 percent globally.

Data from 37 countries indicates that since March 2021, over 6.5 million vaccine doses have gone to Africans with comorbidities such as diabetes, representing 14 percent of all doses administered so far.

Efforts to reach these people are increasing with half of those 6.5 million doses administered in the last couple of months, WHO said.

But Moeti underlined: "Nine months since COVID-19 vaccination campaigns began in Africa, we are still nowhere near where we need to be with protecting our most vulnerable.

"There is an urgent need to step up vaccination and other key services to people at high risk."

Some 4.2 million people die of diabetes annually, according to the international federation.

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