

# WHO: COVID-19 deaths fall overall by 9%, infections stable

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A man pulls his mask to get his routine COVID-19 throat swab at a coronavirus testing site in Beijing, Tuesday, Aug. 9, 2022. Chinese authorities have closed Tibet's famed Potala Palace after a minor outbreak of COVID-19 was reported in the Himalayan region. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong

The number of coronavirus deaths fell by 9% in the last week while new

cases remained relatively stable, according to the latest weekly pandemic report released by the World Health Organization Wednesday.

The U.N. health agency said there were more than 14,000 COVID-19 deaths in the last week and nearly 7 million new infections. The Western Pacific reported a 30% jump in cases while Africa reported a 46% drop. Cases also fell by more than 20% in the Americas and the Middle East.

The number of new deaths rose by 19% in the Middle East, while dropping by more than 70% in Africa, 15% in Europe and 10% in the Americas.

The WHO said that the omicron subvariant BA.5 remains dominant globally, accounting for nearly 70% of all virus sequences shared with the world's biggest publicly available virus database. The agency said other omicron subvariants, including BA.4 and BA.2, appear to be decreasing in prevalence as BA.5 takes over.

The WHO cautioned that its assessment of COVID-19 trends remains compromised by countries dropping many of their testing, surveillance and sequencing efforts as most [countries](#) have relaxed pandemic controls.

Still, Chinese authorities have announced new restrictions this week, after finding COVID-19 cases in the tourist island of Hainan and in Tibet. Earlier this week, the Chinese government shut down Lhasa's Potala Palace, the traditional home of the Dalai Lama, and also locked down Haikou, the capital of Hainan, in addition to several other cities including the beach resort Sanya.



Residents wearing face masks wait in line to get their routine COVID-19 throat swabs at a coronavirus testing site in Beijing, Tuesday, Aug. 9, 2022. Chinese authorities have closed Tibet's famed Potala Palace after a minor outbreak of COVID-19 was reported in the Himalayan region. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong

About 80,000 tourists were stranded this week in Sanya after Chinese officials declared it a COVID-19 hot spot and required people to test negative five times within a week before being allowed to leave.

On Tuesday, the Chinese government sent a first planeload of 125 tourists out of Sanya and said other flights would be organized to fly out tourists in batches once they fulfilled the criteria to leave.

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