

WHO says pandemic's end may be near

September 15 2022



The end of the COVID-19 pandemic is in sight, the leader of the World Health Organization [declared](#) Wednesday, with deaths at their lowest level worldwide since the new coronavirus first began to spread in March

2020.

However, the [death](#) rate is relatively flat and not yet at their lowest level in the United States, experts note.

About 11,000 people around the world died from COVID during the week of Sept. 5 through Sept. 11. That was a drop of 22% from the previous week, the WHO [reported](#). Weekly case numbers also fell the previous week, by 28%, to about 3.1 million.

"We have never been in a better position to end the pandemic," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said during a Wednesday briefing. "We are not there yet, but the end is in sight."

In contrast, deaths in the United States are averaging 478 per day, higher than in July 2021 when the average was 168 deaths per day and also higher than in June 2022 when the average was 258 deaths per day, CBS News reported.

The [trend](#) is a bit different for U.S. COVID case counts: They are now at 73,000 per day, down by 14% over the last two weeks.

White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Ashish Jha said that new bivalent booster shots—targeting both the original virus strain and the BA.4 and BA.5 [omicron subvariants](#)—could provide more and lasting protection against [severe illness](#). It may also offer more protection against infection and transmission.

The United States has seen "an important shift in our fight against the virus," Jha said last week.

Despite the [positive outlook](#), Tedros did not declare an official end to the public health emergency.

The WHO on Wednesday offered six key actions to help countries end outbreaks. These include continued testing, treatment and [vaccinations](#).

Easing up on these efforts now might lead to "more variants, more deaths, more disruption and more uncertainty," Tedros cautioned.

Other key actions are infection control in [health care facilities](#), combating misinformation and clear public communication.

"A marathon runner does not stop when the finish line comes into view," Tedros said. "She runs harder, with all the energy she has left. So must we. We can see the finish line. We're in a winning position. But now is the worst time to stop running."

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [COVID-19](#).

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