

# WHO sets out future COVID policy

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The World Health Organization on Wednesday published its new strategy for fighting COVID-19, seeking to help countries move from emergency mode to a long-term prevention and control strategy.

The publication comes ahead of a meeting of the WHO's COVID-19 emergency committee to decide whether the pandemic is still serious

enough to merit the maximum alert level, which was introduced in January 2020 at the start of the pandemic.

The final decision, which rests with WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, may not be published until several days after that meeting.

In the meantime, the WHO has unveiled its [strategic plan](#) for responding to COVID-19 for 2023-2025, the fourth such plan since the first cases were reported in late 2019 in the Wuhan region of China.

The aim is "to support countries as they transition from an [emergency response](#) to longer-term sustained COVID-19 disease prevention, control and management," the WHO head said in the report.

Last week the WHO said that COVID-19 deaths had dropped by 95 percent since the start of the year—but warned the virus was still on the move.

The World Health Organization said COVID-19 was here to stay and that countries would have to learn how to manage its ongoing non-emergency effects, including the post-COVID-19 condition known as Long COVID.

The new strategy will maintain the two goals of the previous plan, released in 2022; to reduce the circulation of COVID and to treat the virus to reduce mortality, morbidity and long-term consequences.

But the new plan adds a third goal; "to support countries as they transition from an emergency response to longer-term sustained COVID-19 disease prevention, control and management".

The WHO release places strong emphasis on addressing Long COVID,

which appears to arise in 6 percent of symptomatic cases, according to Tedros.

"This is why we urge [countries](#) to maintain sufficient capacity, operational readiness and flexibility to scale up during surges of COVID-19, while maintaining other essential [health](#) services and preparing for the emergence of new variants with increased severity or capacity," said the agency.

Continuing research into the virus and its effects was essential, the WHO said.

"The response to COVID-19 has been costly, but the cost will be greater if we fail to build on those investments by making a sustained commitment to science and [public health](#)," Tedros warned

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