

Announcing World Patient Safety Day 2021

World Patient Safety Day was established in 2019 by the Seventy-second World Health Assembly through the adoption of resolution [WHA72.6 – “Global action on patient safety”](#). The Day is firmly grounded in the fundamental principle of medicine – first do no harm. World Patient Safety Day builds on a series of successful annual global ministerial summits on patient safety which began in London and Bonn in 2016 and 2017, respectively. The overall objectives of the Day are to enhance global understanding of patient safety, increase public engagement in health care safety, and promote global action to prevent and reduce avoidable harm in health care. Each year a theme is selected to shed light on a priority area critical to patient safety and ultimately the achievement of universal health coverage.

The theme selected for World Patient Safety Day 2021 is **“Safe maternal and newborn care”**, due to the significant burden of risks and harm women and newborns are exposed to when receiving unsafe care during childbirth. Despite the significant progress made in reducing maternal and neonatal mortality, the SDG 3 targets are still far from being achieved. The issue has been further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to the disruption of essential health services due to breaks in supply chains, women's inability to access care, and the shortage of skilled health professionals. Even before the pandemic, approximately 810 women and 6700 newborns died daily, with the causes occurring mainly around the time of childbirth. About 2 million babies were also stillborn every year, with over 40% occurring during labour. Most of these deaths and stillbirths are avoidable through the provision of safe and quality care by skilled health care professionals working in supportive environments. Since maternity care is also affected by issues of gender equity and violence, women's experiences during childbirth have the potential to either empower or to inflict damage and emotional trauma on them. Therefore, this year's campaign slogan – **“Act now for safe and respectful childbirth!”** – calls on all stakeholders to accelerate the actions necessary for ensuring safe and respectful childbirth. It is envisaged that the momentum generated by World Patient Safety Day 2021 will revamp stakeholders' efforts to achieve universal health coverage for all women and newborns and ultimately the maternal and newborn SDG 3 targets.

Objectives

1. Raise global awareness on the issues of maternal and newborn safety, particularly during childbirth.
2. Engage multiple stakeholders and adopt effective and innovative strategies to improve maternal and newborn safety.
3. Call for urgent and sustainable actions by all stakeholders to scale up efforts, reach the unreached and ensure safe maternal and newborn care, particularly during childbirth.
4. Advocate the adoption of best practices at the point of care to prevent avoidable risks and harm to all women and newborns during childbirth.

Working together to make childbirth safer

The global campaign for World Patient Safety Day 2021 proposes a wide range of activities to be implemented on and around 17 September 2021, including organization of advocacy and technical events, lighting up of iconic monuments, landmarks and public places in orange (the signature mark of the campaign), and the launch of the World Patient Safety Day 2021–2022 goals. WHO encourages all stakeholders to join the global campaign to promote collective efforts for safe maternal and newborn care, particularly during childbirth.

We request you to share information about your plans to celebrate World Patient Safety Day 2021 by clicking [HERE](#).

For more information about the campaign, please visit the WHO World Patient Safety Day 2021 event page [HERE](#). For further information, please contact us at patientsafety@who.int.