

World Meningitis Day | 5th October 2022

Campaign messaging

This messaging has been created for our supporters all over the world to use in their World Meningitis Day awareness-raising.

It has been developed to provide an overall framing for World Meningitis Day campaigning, with universal appeal that can be adapted to specific regions and contexts.

Please adapt this to suit your activity, including developing content using the individual points that are relevant for you. You can also combine any of the messaging points with the social media templates and infographics in the rest of our toolkit.

Introduction

Together, meningitis and neonatal sepsis are the second biggest infectious cause of death in children under five¹. They can kill in hours, have life-long implications for those that do survive, and have serious health, social and economic consequences.

Many cases of, and deaths from, meningitis are vaccine-preventable, but progress in defeating meningitis lags behind that for other diseases².

Despite significant progress in recent years, meningitis still strikes fear into the hearts of many. It develops rapidly, leaving someone with little time to seek the treatment they need to survive.

For those that do survive, they live with the consequences of meningitis, including the need for the right support and aftercare to cope with physical and intellectual disabilities. Many people do not realise that meningitis and neonatal sepsis are the world's leading cause of severe intellectual disability³, and that meningitis is the leading infectious cause of severe hearing loss⁴.

Across the world, there are populations who do not have access to the vaccines that will prevent this deadly infection. Many don't know vaccines exist, or understand why it is so important to have them. There is no vaccine that protects against all causes of meningitis.

This is why, each year, World Meningitis Day brings together people from all over the world to highlight the need to raise awareness of meningitis, its signs and symptoms, the vaccines that are available, and that it is an infection that needs global attention and effort to be defeated.

¹ WHO Global Health Estimates, 2019

² Defeating Meningitis by 2030. A Global Road Map, World Health Organization, 2021

³ / ⁴ Global Burden of Disease Study 2019, data collated using the Meningitis Progress Tracker, May 2022



But this World Meningitis Day there is even greater hope. For the first time, there is a global action plan to defeat meningitis, with the landmark launch of the World Health Organization's *Global Road Map to Defeat Meningitis by 2030*. We have global goals in place and now need support from countries all over the world to realise those ambitions.

Defeating meningitis matters to millions of people all over the world, every day.

It is a race against time from the moment the infection strikes.

It is a race against time to implement a global road map by 2030 that will dramatically improve prevention, diagnosis and treatment, disease monitoring, health advocacy, and support and aftercare.

Let's raise our voices across the world in support of its aims, so we can defeat a terrible, yet largely vaccine-preventable infection. Join us this World Meningitis Day in the race to defeat meningitis. Let's do it together.

[#DefeatMeningitis](#) | [#WorldMeningitisDay2022](#)

[World Meningitis Day | Key messages](#)

Let's prevent the preventable for a brighter future for all

- Globally, bacterial meningitis kills 1 in 10 people who contract it, and causes lifelong disability in 1 in 5 people who survive it.
- The main causes of bacterial meningitis include meningococcus, pneumococcus, haemophilus influenzae and Group B Streptococcus (GBS).
- Meningitis is frightening; preventing it means peace of mind for you and your loved ones.
- Bacterial meningitis is largely vaccine-preventable, yet there is no vaccine that protects against all causes, and access to vaccines is not equal across the world. Understand what you're protected against, and what vaccines are available to you.
- Preventing meningitis strengthens communities and healthcare systems yet today meningitis has the most impact on women (as the people most often caring for those with lifelong disabilities)⁵ and meningitis disproportionately affects the poorest communities in the world⁶.
- A global pandemic has meant disruption for us all, including in routine immunisations. Check what vaccines are available to you and make sure you, and everyone you care about, are up-to-date.

⁵ Debbie Budlender, *Time Use Studies and Unpaid Care Work* (New York, Routledge, 2010), and Marzia Fontana, "Gender dimensions of rural and agricultural employment", in *Gender Dimensions of Agricultural and Rural Employment: Differentiated Pathways out of Poverty —Status, Trends and Gaps* (Rome, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2010).

⁶ Global and regional risk of disabling sequelae from bacterial meningitis: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Edmond K, Clark A, Korczak VS, Sanderson C, Griffiths UK, Rudan I.

Don't be in a race against meningitis: know the symptoms and act fast

- Meningitis strikes suddenly and can kill within hours.
- Meningitis has a range of causes including bacteria, viruses and fungi.
- Meningitis symptoms can be confused with other illnesses including the flu, COVID-19 and malaria. Don't mistake it for an infection that doesn't progress as quickly, always trust your instincts and get medical help immediately.
- Know the meningitis signs and symptoms, so you know when to act quickly.
- Share the signs and symptoms with everyone you know and help protect your community.

A road map is in place: let's support it now and defeat meningitis by 2030

- The [World Health Organization's Global Road Map to Defeat Meningitis by 2030](#) has been developed by hundreds of global experts, including people directly affected by meningitis, scientists, country representatives, and civil society organisations.
- There is a global plan that will dramatically improve prevention, diagnosis and treatment, disease monitoring, health advocacy, and support and aftercare. Let's raise our voices across the world in support of its aims, so we can defeat meningitis.
- Turning [the road map into reality](#) could save more than 200,000 lives annually and significantly reduce disabilities caused by meningitis.
- Countries worldwide have committed to the vision of the *Global Road Map to Defeat Meningitis by 2030* but it's up to everyone to make that vision a reality. Make your voices heard and support this global action plan.
- Let's make every day to 2030 matter, let's hold our governments to account: the clock is ticking.

Why defeating meningitis matters to me

- This race protects us all: meningitis can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time.
- Meningitis is life-changing; its impacts devastate families and communities every day.
- Those at greatest risk of meningitis are newborns, children under 5, young and older adults. It is our sisters and brothers, our children and grandparents, our friends and parents. It is not 'over there'; it is right here.
- Tell your story: why does racing to defeat meningitis matter to you.
- Let's race to defeat meningitis together; let's leave no one behind.

[#DefeatMeningitis](#) | [#WorldMeningitisDay2022](#)

NB We have included references for your information but these do not need to be used within the content you create.