World Meningitis Day 2021: Take Action #DefeatMeningitis

COVID-19 and Virtual Awareness-Raising

This World Meningitis Day, CoMO is joining people worldwide to raise awareness of why we must Take Action #DefeatMeningitis. Our members and all of the people working hard to defeat meningitis know why we must continue our work, even during this challenging time, and we thank you all for your support.

Given the current situation with the novel coronavirus (Covid-19), we understand that many individuals and organisations will have been impacted and we sincerely hope that you are all well and keeping safe.

At the time of writing (12th January 2021), the WHO reports that there are over 88 million cases in 223 countries, areas or territories. As a result, many governments around the world have issued public health guidelines to help limit the spread of the virus.

These guidelines may affect your plans for World Meningitis Day, particularly if your government has imposed a lockdown and/or physical distancing. In these uncertain times, CoMO wants to let you know that, if you’re able and willing to do so, there are still lots of things you can do to raise awareness this World Meningitis Day while keeping yourself and your community safe.

CoMO is still committed to continuing with World Meningitis Day and raising awareness of this deadly disease that claims far too many lives every year. With healthcare systems all over the world being overwhelmed, it is more important than ever to support them and stop the return of vaccine preventable diseases.

This resource is for anyone who is looking for alternatives to activities that they can no longer carry out due to Covid-19. Feel free to use and share this document, along with any of our other World Meningitis Day resources, accessible via our World Meningitis Day homepage.

Take Action, #DefeatMeningitis

What to expect from this guide:

Raising Awareness ........................................................................................................2

Social Media Communications .......................................................................................2

Virtual Events .................................................................................................................3

  Accessibility ..................................................................................................................3

  Virtual Coffee Morning .............................................................................................3

  Virtual Challenge Events ...........................................................................................3

Additional Information about Covid-19 .........................................................................4
Raising Awareness

Social Media Communications
With e spending more time indoors, people are more online now than ever. All of our resources are publicly available online so please feel free to use any of them.

Try out any (or all!) of the options below on your social media channels. Remember to include the following hashtags in your posts: #WorldMeningitisDay #DefeatMeningitis.

Stuck for ideas on social media posts? Have a look at our suggestions for inspiration!

- Post about your own experience of meningitis and let us know why you want to #DefeatMeningitis.
- Add a frame to your Facebook and/or Twitter profile picture and share the links with your networks!
- Share the signs and symptoms using our infographics, with two different versions of each, adapted for Twitter and Facebook/Instagram.
  - Our infographics are available in 10 languages: Akan (Twi), Danish, English, French, Indonesian, Japanese, Norwegian, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish.
- Encourage people to learn more about vaccines from reputable sources. Here are a couple of examples of scientifically verified information about vaccines:
  - CoMO’s webpage on Prevention.
  - The WHO’s Q&A on vaccines.
- We’ll be posting every day and just sharing or retweeting one of our posts will help us reach new audiences and spread the word! Follow our updates on: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as we’ll share videos and blog posts.
- Talk about how to better support people with disabilities or people suffering from bereavement. Whether it’s in your place of work, in the media, or in politics, we can all do more to support people affected by meningitis.
- Write how you’re helping to #DefeatMeningitis on a whiteboard or piece of paper, take a picture, tag us, and share it on social media. We’ll share and amplify your good deed!
- Share our testimonial tiles, adapted for Twitter and Facebook/Instagram.
  - These are images of people sharing their experiences of meningitis and they were created specifically with social media in mind.

Davide, Spain
“Three years ago, meningitis was going to take my life. My body managed to cope but I had to sacrifice parts of four of my limbs. We need to defeat meningitis so that there are no more cases like mine. Together we can do it.”
Virtual Events

Given the length of time the world has been affected by Covid-19, there are lots of resources online with information on best practice when moving events online.

The Center for Scientific Collaboration and Community Engagement (CSCCE), for instance, created a guide looking at different virtual event formats, sharing checklists and tips on how to make the most of each. You can download the extensive guide here and we would recommend checking out their website if you’re interested in their work.

Accessibility

For accessibility, particularly for organisations working with people affected by meningitis, you may find this guide on captioning, subtitles, and transcription for online meetings and events helpful.

This opens up your events and meetings to people who are hard of hearing or who may not be fluent in the language you’re using.

Virtual Coffee Morning

An example of an informal event you could hold could be a virtual coffee morning. Coffee mornings are a great way to meet and chat over some biscuits and tea but you can still do that using Zoom, WhatsApp or Houseparty, meeting with people from the comfort of your own home while protecting your community. You can use the opportunity to talk about meningitis and septicaemia with your co-workers, friends and family.

It is especially important during this time to make sure that you’re maintaining social contact with loved ones so catch-up on April 24th 2021 and use the opportunity to talk about meningitis! You could talk about:

- The signs and symptoms.
- The importance of prevention and how vaccines are safe and effective.
- The after effects of the disease.
- People’s experiences of the disease (which you can read on our website or watch on our YouTube channel) and how to better support people affected by meningitis, whether its survivors or loved ones who lost someone to the disease.
Virtual Challenge Events

In 2020, the World Meningitis Day campaign occurred at a time where many governments around the world had instated strict lockdowns, affecting people’s plans to raise awareness and/or fundraise for their organisations.

Despite the challenges, CoMO Members found lots of amazing and innovative ways to get people engaged and talking about meningitis. You can find a snippet of their activities here.

Among these activities was a virtual march (“Marche Des Anges Virtuelle”) organised by Ensemble Contre Les Meningites. Instead of a large group of people meeting up, like regular challenge events, this virtual walk saw individuals use their free time to exercise on their own (in line with public health guidelines). Extreme walker Gerard Bertin walked 103km from 24-26th April - all at home!

Not only was there great social media and press interaction but they managed to fundraise for their organisation so they can continue to share life-saving information in France. As many people are looking for ways to fill their time and stay active, this may be of interest to you, particularly if you’re hoping to raise some money while raising awareness.

Additional Information about Covid-19

Before carrying out any World Meningitis Day activity please ensure that it is safe for you and others. Stay on top of the latest news in your country and make sure you’re following credible sources of information. We recommend the following:

- **Total number of cases globally** by John Hopkins University.
- **Official advice on the coronavirus** from the World Health Organisation.
- Europe: **Find out your country’s official source of information** for COVID-19 by The European Centre for Disease Control
- Africa: Find **publications and resources** on COVID-19 by The Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
- America: **Find resources and advice for COVID-19** by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- WHO South-East Asia Region: **Find the latest news** and a dashboard of the COVID-19 situation.
- Official governmental public health websites.

We’re continuously reviewing the scientific literature and staying in touch with our experts on CoMO’s Scientific Advisory Board to learn more about the disease and its possible links to meningitis. We’ll share information about links to meningitis as soon as we learn more.

If you have any questions at this time regarding the campaign or Covid-19 and meningitis, please email us.

Stay safe everyone and thank you for getting involved!