



Global Roadmap to Defeat Meningitis: WHO

Why in News

The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) has launched the **first-ever global strategy** to defeat meningitis - '**Global Roadmap to Defeat Meningitis by 2030**'.

Key Points

▪ About:

- **Goals:** The roadmap includes three visionary goals:
 - **Eliminate epidemics of bacterial meningitis.**
 - **Reduce cases of vaccine-preventable bacterial meningitis** by 50% and deaths by 70%.
 - **Reduce disability** and improve quality of life after meningitis of any cause.
- **Aims:**
 - **Achievement of high immunisation coverage**, development of new affordable vaccines and improved prevention strategies and outbreak response.
 - **Speedy diagnosis** and optimal treatment for patients.
 - Good data to guide prevention and control efforts.
 - **Care and support** for those affected, focusing on early recognition and improved access to care and support for after-effects.
 - **Advocacy and engagement**, to ensure high awareness of meningitis, accountability for national plans, and affirmation of the right to prevention, care and after-care services.

▪ Meningitis:

- **About:** Meningitis is **an inflammation (swelling) of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord.**
 - It is **predominantly caused by bacterial and viral infection.** However, **injuries, cancer, certain drugs, and other types of infections** also can cause meningitis.
- **Symptoms:** Severe headache that seems different from normal, Sudden high fever, Stiff neck, Confusion or difficulty concentrating, etc.
- **Transmission: Most bacteria** that cause meningitis such as *meningococcus*, *pneumococcus* and *Haemophilus influenzae* are carried in the human nose and throat.
 - They spread from **person to person by respiratory droplets or throat secretions.**
 - Group B streptococcus (bacteria) is often spread from **mother to child around the time of birth.**
- **Impact:** Meningitis is fatal and debilitating, striking fast with serious health, economic and social consequences, including life-long disabilities, and affecting people of all ages in all countries.

- Meningitis caused by **bacterial infection causes around 2,50,000 deaths** a year and can lead to **fast-spreading epidemics**.
- It **kills a tenth of those infected**, mostly children and young people and **leaves a fifth with long-lasting disability**, such as seizures, hearing and vision loss, neurological damage, and cognitive impairment.
- **Spread:** Meningitis epidemics have occurred in the last decade in all regions of the world. But it is most common in the **'Meningitis Belt,'** which spans 26 countries across **sub-Saharan Africa**.
- **Available Vaccines:** Meningococcal, Haemophilus influenzae type b and Pneumococcal vaccines.
- **Treatment:** A range of antibiotics is used to treat meningitis, including penicillin, ampicillin, and ceftriaxone.

[Source: DTE](#)

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