

## **World Meningitis Day 2019** Drop-in article/Blog post

*This article can be used in a variety of publications, such as community newspapers and newsletters as well as in email messages, websites and blogs. It can be “dropped in” as is, with no editing needed.*

### **April 24, 2019 is World Meningitis Day**

Meningococcal disease can strike in a matter of hours, but the after effects can last a lifetime.

After effects can be life-changing and may include memory loss, deafness, loss of sight, epilepsy, paralysis, limb loss, organ damage and brain damage. And those who lose a loved one to the disease have their lives changed forever.

April 24, 2019 is World Meningitis Day, and the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency is reminding our community that the best way to prevent some of the most common types of meningococcal disease is with immunization. Immunization is a key part of the Building Better Health component of *Live Well San Diego*, a countywide initiative to improve the health and well-being of local residents.

The San Diego Immunization Program website ([www.sdiz.org](http://www.sdiz.org)) will share information and resources to help celebrate World Meningitis Day. Resources will include social media messages, e-mail signature lines, web banners, logos and more. Please use these resources to spread the word about the importance of meningococcal immunization to your friends, family, co-workers and others in your community.

Meningococcus is one of the most common bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis. There are different types of meningococcus (called serogroups). Serogroups B, C, and Y cause the majority of disease in the United States. Many teenagers get vaccinated against serogroups A, C, Y, and W135. However, they may not have received the newer serogroup B vaccine.

Here in San Diego County, a total of 11 cases of meningococcal disease were reported in 2018 countywide, the highest since 2013. In 2018 a total of 3 cases of meningococcal disease were reported among students at San Diego State University (SDSU). An outbreak was declared in September and close contacts of the cases were identified and provided antibiotics. All unimmunized SDSU undergraduate students 23 years of age and younger were recommended to get the meningococcal B vaccine. Educational outreach efforts were made to students and several free mass vaccination events were held at several locations on campus. As of March 31, 2019, a total of 17 mass vaccination events provided 4,948 vaccinations.

No further cases of serogroup B meningococcal disease have been reported in the SDSU student population, but educational and disease surveillance efforts continue.

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## **World Meningitis Day—2**

Serogroup B has been found in 37 percent of San Diego County cases since 2008, and serogroup B accounts for seven of the 11 meningococcal disease cases reported in 2018. Serogroup B disease has been the cause of a number of U.S. university/college outbreaks since 2008, including two others in California: one at the University of California, Santa Barbara in 2013 and one at Santa Clara University in 2016.

This outbreak, and others in California and around the US, underscore the importance of vaccination against meningococcal disease. Parents should use World Meningitis Day as a reminder to ask their child's doctor about the disease and vaccines to protect against it.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Meningococcal Disease**

<https://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/>

### **World Meningitis Day**

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/)

### **ShotByShot.org – Stories of vaccine-preventable diseases**

<http://www.shotbyshot.org/stories/meningococcal-overview/>

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