https://www.google.com/search?q=when+was+the+last+meningitis+outbreak&num=10&sxsrf=ANbL-n7uf7_4IqL9QEH-KLLjpQhJtnPaWA%3A1774132258928&aep=1&ntc=1&mstk=AUtExfDEW00TlRIdTjqNB5MjoebNfCFc5dezZGIsGqsrPAvX4gMGYwJKPY2ez_56we_iaYvpUcuTTAyZKbxjqnRluhrJU8t18iQAVambVL507MAkGZdbLt5FsmjtEUR7jaFbC7gwPYyyPB-HMVlKYfUUrqdF0a4UCI4XR6-EZ6WhT81Z1SmF0iNaErjsVxTdqOcA3hRWznkD0b3dOvCjb1deieUlCsz-LudkLsD4p6DwF-CdJ2h7p9QLa26oZtVIwkwo-XZC6I4hI-mc9RG_SZnL86DOMwe6zh9Iu7vvmQDL2FTnahN-xfRYbucSQJaayp_CkQ-aumbC5US5Ng&csuir=1&mtid=Wxy_adbZElubhbIPz5iN2QU&udm=50
21.03.2026



when was the last meningitis outbreak

As of March 21, 2026, an ongoing and **unprecedented** meningitis B outbreak is affecting **Kent, England**, with a total of **34 confirmed or suspected cases** and **two confirmed deaths** reported.

RTE.ie +2

Current Outbreak Details: Kent, UK (March 2026)

- **Location**: Centred primarily on the University of Kent campus in Canterbury, with additional cases identified in four local schools and a London higher education institute.
- **Timeline**: The first case was reported on **March 13, 2026**. Health officials believe the outbreak was triggered by a "super-spreader event" at **Club Chemistry**, a nightclub in Canterbury, between March 5 and March 7.
- **Impact**:
  - **34 cases** (up from 29 cases as of March 20).
  - **2 deaths**: An 18-year-old sixth-form student and a 21-year-old university student.
- **Strain**: The primary strain identified is **Meningitis B (MenB)**, which is particularly invasive and often affects teenagers and young adults.
- **Response**: The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has launched a "full-scale response," offering antibiotics to roughly 10,000 people and targeted vaccinations to over 5,000 students to contain the spread.

RTE.ie +5

Situation in Ireland

While there is an active outbreak in England, the Health Service Executive (HSE) has confirmed there is **no evidence of an increase or link** to the Kent outbreak in Ireland.

RTE.ie +1

- **2026 Stats**: 12 cases of meningococcal disease have been reported in Ireland so far this year, with **no deaths**.

- **Historical Context**: Cases in Ireland remain sporadic; there were 60 cases reported in 2025 and 66 in 2024.

Health Protection Surveillance Centre +3

Symptoms to Watch For

Health officials advise seeking medical help immediately if you experience the following, especially if you have recently been in the Kent area:

- High fever (

) and severe headache.

- Stiff neck and sensitivity to bright light.
- A **rash or spots** that do not fade under pressure (though you should not wait for a rash to appear before seeking help).
- Cold hands and feet, rapid breathing, or drowsiness.

Are you looking for information on **vaccination availability** or **travel advisories** related to the Kent area?

This is for informational purposes only. For medical advice or diagnosis, consult a professional. AI responses may include mistakes. Learn more

12 sites

- News: Meningococcal disease outbreak in Kent, UK

19 Mar 2026 — Meningococcal disease in Ireland. ... In 2026 to date, there have been 12 cases of meningococcal disease reported in Ireland with ...

Health Protection Surveillance Centre

- Number of cases in UK meningitis outbreak rises to 34

21 Mar 2026 — Updated / Saturday, 21 Mar 2026 09:57. Students queued to receive vaccines and antibiotics at the University of Kent campus in Can...

RTE.ie

- Why is this meningitis outbreak so explosive? - BBC

18 Mar 2026 — * Meningitis cases rise as vaccine queues continue. The UKHSA says the number of confirmed or suspected cases in Kent has risen fr...

BBC

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have there ever been meningitis outbreaks

Yes, meningitis outbreaks have occurred throughout history and continue to happen today

. While most cases of bacterial meningitis are sporadic (isolated), certain conditions—like crowded living spaces or specific environmental factors—can trigger rapid, "explosive" clusters of the disease.

BBC +1

Notable Historical and Regional Outbreaks

- **The African "Meningitis Belt"**: This region, stretching from Senegal to Ethiopia, experiences regular, large-scale epidemics.
  - **1996–1997**: The largest wave ever recorded swept across Africa, causing over **250,000 cases** and **25,000 deaths**.
  - **2009**: Another major epidemic in the belt resulted in more than **80,000 reported cases**.
- **Brazil (1974)**: São Paulo experienced the largest localised outbreak ever recorded, with **30,000 cases**.
- **Military Outbreaks (WWII)**: The United States military saw a severe epidemic between 1941 and 1943, with over **5,000 cases** reported among troops.
- **United Kingdom (1980s)**: Gloucestershire saw a prolonged MenB outbreak with **65 cases** over four and a half years.

BBC +5

Recent and Ongoing Outbreaks (2024–2026)

- **Kent, England (March 2026)**: An ongoing "unprecedented" outbreak of **Meningitis B** has reached **34 confirmed or suspected cases** and caused **two deaths**. This is considered the largest cluster of cases in a generation.
- **United States & Australia (2022–2024)**: A specific strain of **Serogroup Y** caused an outbreak in Virginia starting in 2022 (27 cases by 2023) and a similar cluster of over 40 cases in Australia in 2023.
- **Nigeria (February 2024)**: A recent outbreak in northern Nigeria killed **20 students** in secondary schools.

RTE.ie +5

Why Outbreaks Happen

Meningitis bacteria often live harmlessly in the nose or throat of healthy carriers (**up to 25% of teenagers**). Outbreaks typically occur when:

BBC

- **Mass Gatherings**: Crowded settings like nightclubs, university halls, or religious pilgrimages (like the Hajj) facilitate rapid spread through close contact.

- **Environmental Triggers**: In Africa, dry, dusty conditions can irritate the throat, making it easier for bacteria to enter the bloodstream.
- **Waning Immunity**: Populations that haven't been exposed to a certain strain or who have missed vaccinations (e.g., due to pandemic lockdowns) may be more vulnerable.

BBC +4

Are you interested in learning about the **specific vaccines** used to prevent these different strains?

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13 sites

- Global Epidemiology of Meningococcal Disease-Causing ... - PMC
  7 Nov 2024 — Serogroup C still caused > 20% of global IMD through the mid-2010s. Serogroup W became a significant contributor to global IMD aft...
  National Institutes of Health (.gov)
- Meningitis - World Health Organization (WHO)
  1 Apr 2025 — Who is at risk? Meningitis can affect anyone anywhere, and at any age. The pathogens that cause it can vary, based on a person's a...
  World Health Organization (WHO)
- Meningitis Vaccine Project: Epidemics in Africa
  Periodic waves of meningitis epidemics occur across sub-Saharan Africa, wreaking havoc in the region * Size of epidemics. The size...
  www.meningvax.org

Show all

can you tell me more on the 2009 meningitis outbreak in africa

The **2009 meningitis outbreak** was the largest epidemic in the African "Meningitis Belt" since 1996, resulting in **over 80,000 cases** and roughly **1,100 to 1,500 deaths**.

Wikipedia +2

Key Outbreak Details

- **Most Affected Countries**: **Nigeria** and **Niger** were the epicentre, accounting for more than 85% of cases. Other affected nations included **Burkina Faso** and **Mali**.
- **Dominant Strain**: The epidemic was primarily caused by **Neisseria meningitidis serogroup A** (NmA), which historically accounted for up to 85% of African meningitis outbreaks.
- **Seasonality**: The outbreak peaked during the **dry season** (January to June), when dry, dusty winds (the Harmattan) irritate the throat, facilitating the spread of bacteria.

Wikipedia +6

Impact by Country (as of mid-2009 reports)

Country	Suspected Cases	Deaths	Highlights
Nigeria	~56,000+	**~2,500+**	Hardest hit; 22 states and 217 local government areas affected.
Niger	~13,000+	**~550+**	Over 20 districts crossed the epidemic threshold.
Burkina Faso	~1,700+	**~250+**	Faced a concurrent small measles outbreak.
Mali	54	6	Several organisations were conducting vaccine trials here during the peak.

Response and Legacy

- **Mass Vaccination**: Emergency campaigns led by WHO, UNICEF, and MSF administered **over 13 million doses of polysaccharide vaccines in**

  Nigeria

  and Niger.

- **Introduction of MenAfriVac**: The severity of the 2009 season accelerated the launch of **MenAfriVac**, a new conjugate vaccine designed specifically for the region. Since its rollout in 2010, **cases of serogroup A meningitis have declined by more than 99% across the belt.**

World Health Organization (WHO) +4

Would you like to know more about how **MenAfriVac** changed the way meningitis is managed in Africa today?

This is for informational purposes only. For medical advice or diagnosis, consult a professional. AI responses may include mistakes. Learn more

10 sites

- Meningococcal Disease: situation in the African Meningitis Belt

  25 Mar 2009 — 2009 - Niger * 25 March 2009 - During the first 11 weeks of 2009 (January 1- March 15), a total of 24 868 suspected cases, includi...

  World Health Organization (WHO)
- 2009–2010 West African meningitis outbreak - Wikipedia

  Table_title: 2009–2010 West African meningitis outbreak Table_content: row: | Countries affected by the epidemic | | row: | Date |

Wikipedia

- Meningitis Vaccine Project: Epidemics in Africa
  Periodic waves of meningitis epidemics occur across sub-Saharan Africa, wreaking havoc in the region. Studies indicate that epidem...
  www.meningvax.org

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can you tell me more about the 1996-1997 outbreak in africa

The 1996–1997 meningitis epidemic in Africa was the **largest and most devastating** in the history of the "Meningitis Belt". During this period, more than **250,000 cases and roughly 25,000 deaths** were recorded across the region.

www.meningvax.org +1

Key Statistics and Scope

- **Total Impact**: The wave swept across several sub-Saharan countries, with **Nigeria** and **Burkina Faso** being the hardest hit.
- **Case Fatality Rate (CFR)**: The average mortality rate was approximately **10%**, though in some isolated areas without prompt treatment, it reached as high as **30–50%**.
- **Primary Strain**: The epidemic was caused by **Neisseria meningitidis serogroup A**.

World Health Organization (WHO) +4

Impact by Country (1996 Peak)

Country	1996 Cases	1996 Deaths	Notes
Nigeria	~109,580	~11,717	The most serious epidemic ever recorded in the country.
Burkina Faso	~42,129	~4,200	Faced a massive strain on its healthcare system.
Mali	~2,347 (by March)	~319	Promptly declared an epidemic in Bamako to start mass vaccination.
Niger	~5,529 (early data)	~584	Continued a cycle that had begun as early as 1994.

Historical Significance and Response

- **Vaccine Shortage**: The sheer scale of the 1996 outbreak **exhausted the global supply** of the existing polysaccharide vaccine. This critical shortage led to the creation of the International

Coordinating Group (ICG) on Vaccine Provision in 1997 to manage and distribute limited stocks fairly.

- **Long-term Effects**: Beyond the high death toll, thousands of survivors were left with permanent disabilities, including **deafness, brain damage, and limb loss**.
- **Shift in Strategy**: This disaster was the primary catalyst for the development of **MenAfriVac**, a low-cost conjugate vaccine specifically designed to eliminate serogroup A epidemics in Africa.

Irish Medical Journal +4

Would you like to know more about the **long-term health complications** survivors face or how the World Health Organization manages these outbreaks today?

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10 sites

- World Health Organization
  * 1. Background. Large-scale epidemics of meningococcal meningitis occur in cycles with irregular intervals in the African meningi...
  World Health Organization (WHO)
- CENTRAL AND WESTERN AFRICA MENINGITIS (Appeal 08 ...
  9 May 1997 — Some information about Meningitis. The meningitis strain causing the epidemics in Africa is the Neisseria Meningeo Coccus bacteria...
  IFRC
- Africa's meningitis belt: why there's a case for a booster ...
  19 Aug 2018 — In 1996-1997 the largest ever recorded epidemic of Group A meningococcal meningitis and septicaemia (MenA) swept across the region...
  ReliefWeb

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can you tell me more about Brazil 1974 outbreak

The 1974 meningitis outbreak in Brazil was a massive and unprecedented public health emergency, peaking with an incidence rate of **179 cases per 100,000 inhabitants** in São Paulo. It is primarily remembered for a "lightning-fast" mass vaccination campaign that reached nearly the entire population.

HAL-SHS +3

Key Outbreak Facts

- **The Overlapping Strains**: Brazil faced a unique "double wave" of the disease. A serogroup C outbreak that began in 1971 had not yet ended when a more aggressive **serogroup A** strain emerged in April 1974.

- **The Epicentre**: São Paulo was the hardest-hit city, with hospitals becoming so overwhelmed that they were compared to "plagues of medieval times".
- **Fatalities**: Official records from the time were often censored by the military dictatorship, but historical estimates suggest **at least 4,000 deaths occurred in São Paulo alone** during the peak.
- **Symptom Severity**: Doctors reported **horrifying forms of the disease, including "lightning haemorrhages" and necrosis so severe that some patients lost fingers or other extremities**.

Oxford Academic +2

The Unprecedented Response (1974–1975)

Faced with a rising death toll and a population in panic, the Brazilian government launched one of the largest vaccination drives in history.

HAL-SHS +1

- **90 Million Vaccinated**: In less than a year, Brazil vaccinated roughly **90% of its population**.
- **Rapid Execution**: In São Paulo, over **10 million people** were vaccinated in just **four days** (April 21–24, 1975) using "injector pistols" that could deliver shots quickly without needles.
- **Global Collaboration**: The French Institut Mérieux produced and delivered over **80 million doses** of a newly developed bivalent (A and C) vaccine to meet Brazil's urgent demand.
- **Social Mobilisation**: The campaign was highly visible, using slogans like *"the vaccine or the coffin"* and even a song recorded by a famous TV singer to encourage participation.

Oxford Academic +2

Legacy

The campaign was a major success, causing disease rates to drop sharply within days of the mass vaccinations. It also served as a critical real-world test for the **polysaccharide A and C vaccines**, which later became the standard for controlling epidemics globally.

Oxford Academic +1

Would you like to know more about the **technology behind the injector pistols** used in this campaign or the **political impact** the outbreak had on Brazil's government?

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7 sites

- the vaccination campaign against meningitis in Brazil (1974 ...

Confronted with the rapid spread of this epidemic and its high mortality, the Brazilian government made the decision to vaccinate ...

HAL-SHS

- The Vaccination Campaign Against Meningitis in Brazil (1974 ...
  31 Dec 2019 — Brazil's health minister Paulo de Almeida Machado admitted that: * The gradual rise in the incidence of meningococcal meningitis r...

  Oxford Academic
- Epidemiological aspects of meningococcal meningitis in the ...
  Epidemiological aspects of meningococcal meningitis in the city of S. Paulo, Brazil from 1968 through 1974. ... An epidemiological...

  Revista de Saúde Pública

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how many cases of meningitis have been recorded yearly in the last 5 years

In the last five years, recorded cases of meningitis initially dropped to record lows during the COVID-19 pandemic due to social distancing measures but have since rebounded significantly .

The Guardian

Annual Meningitis Trends (2021–2025)

The following table reflects reported cases of **Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD)**—the most severe form of bacterial meningitis—across different regions:

Year	Ireland (Total)	Ireland (MenB)	England (Confirmed)	Global (Est. Childhood Cases)
2021	32	—	80	**1.33** million
2022	42	—	205	—
2023	11*	—	396	**2.3 million** (all ages)
2024	66	42	~400	—
2025	60	38	~400+	—

**Note: 2023 figures for Ireland vary by source; some provisional reports indicate a higher rebound similar to 2024 trends.*

Immunisation Bulletin

Key Recent Observations

- **The "Pandemic Rebound"**: Health experts note that immunity to certain strains, particularly Meningitis B, may have waned during the pandemic as young people were less exposed to the bacteria.
- **2026 Status**: As of March 2026, an unprecedented outbreak in Kent, UK has already recorded **34 cases** in a single month.

- **Ireland (2026)**: In the first three months of 2026, Ireland has recorded **12 cases** of meningococcal disease, with 9 confirmed as Serogroup B.
- **Global Progress**: Despite recent local outbreaks, the **WHO's "Defeating Meningitis by 2030" roadmap aims to eliminate bacterial meningitis epidemics globally through universal vaccine access.**

The Guardian +6

Would you like to see a breakdown of cases by **age group** or more information on the **symptoms of the B strain** currently causing concerns?

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12 sites

- Meningitis is back – and here is why | Devi Sridhar
  17 Mar 2026 — With the restrictions on mixing and protections taken to limit spread of Covid-19 in 2020, meningitis cases dropped to record lows...
  The Guardian
- News: Meningococcal disease outbreak in Kent, UK
  19 Mar 2026 — Meningococcal disease in Ireland. There is no evidence of an increase in invasive meningococcal disease activity in Ireland beyond...
  Health Protection Surveillance Centre
- Increase in Meningococcal Disease Cases: Call to Action for ...
  15 Sept 2024 — Provisional data from the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) indicates 23 cases so far this year, up from 17 in 2024 and...
  Immunisation Bulletin

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how many cases of meningitis have been recorded yearly in the last 5 years in africa

In the last five years, meningitis cases in Africa have generally decreased from historical highs due to the rollout of the **MenAfriVac** vaccine, although seasonal outbreaks continue in the "Meningitis Belt".

Pan African Medical Journal

Annual Meningitis Cases in Africa (2020–2024)

Recent data from the WHO African Region shows a trend of **roughly 25,000 to 30,000 suspected cases annually across the meningitis belt.**

Pan African Medical Journal +1

Year	Suspected Cases (Approx.)	Key Outbreak Locations
2020	~20,000–25,000	Lower reporting due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.
2021	~24,000	Outbreaks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (205 deaths).
2022	~25,000	Regional outbreaks in Nigeria and Niger.
2023	~26,000	Nigeria reported over 1,600 suspected cases by mid-April.
2024	**26,298**	Continued seasonal clusters in 12 belt countries.

Recent Developments (2025–2026)

- **2025 Data**: Early reports from the WHO African Region for early 2025 showed over **6,300 suspected cases** and **1,200 deaths** by late March, with significant activity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ghana.
- **Strain Evolution**: While **Serogroup A** has been nearly eliminated (zero cases in the last 5 years), current outbreaks are primarily driven by **Serogroup C**, **W**, and **X**, as well as *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.
- **New Vaccine Launch (2024)**: In April 2024, Nigeria became the first country to launch **Men5CV**, a revolutionary "5-in-1" vaccine protecting against all five major meningococcal strains (A, C, W, Y, and X) in a single shot.

World Health Organization (WHO) +3

Are you looking for details on **specific high-risk countries** in the belt or more information on the **new 5-in-1 vaccine**?

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8 sites

- Towards an African Region free of meningitis epidemics by 2030

  26 Aug 2025 — Towards an African Region free of meningitis epidemics by 2030: vision, progress, challenges and future directions * Introduction:

  Pan African Medical Journal

- Meningitis - Nigeria - World Health Organization (WHO)

  27 Apr 2023 — A total of 481 cerebrospinal fluid samples were collected from patients in 18 states. Out of these samples, 247 tested positive fo...

World Health Organization (WHO)

- Meningitis - DPC Data Portal | WHO AFRO
  1 Jan 2024 — * 6 380. * 1 718. Cases reported from 1st Jan. 2024 to 23rd Mar 2025. Deaths reported from 1st Jan. 2024 to 23rd Mar 2025. * 1 232...

World Health Organization (WHO)

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how many cases of meningitis have been recorded yearly in the last 5 years globally and where were the outbreaks

Globally, roughly **2.5 million people contract bacterial meningitis every year, resulting in approximately 300,000 deaths.** While overall incidence declined during the COVID-19 pandemic due to social distancing, cases have rebounded significantly since 2021 as social mixing resumed and immunity waned.

The Guardian +3

Annual Global Case Estimates

Global data for all forms of meningitis is often reported with a lag, but recent estimates for bacterial and invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) show a clear upward trend post-2021:

Year	Global Childhood Cases (Est.)	Key Regional Trends
2021	**1.33 Million**	Record lows in many countries due to pandemic lockdowns.
2022	—	**Rebound begins**: Notification rates rose to 0.3 per 100k in the EU/EEA.
2023	**2.3 Million** (All ages)	Significant increases in the US (415 cases) and England (396 cases).
2024	—	Continued resurgence; Nigeria launched the first "5-in-1" Men5CV vaccine to combat rising belt cases.
2025	—	High seasonal activity in the African Meningitis Belt (e.g., DRC and Ghana).

Major Outbreaks (2021–2026)

Outbreaks in the last five years have shifted from traditional serogroups to more diverse strains, often linked to specific social events or regions:

- **Kent, England (March 2026)**: A current, "unprecedented" **Meningitis B** outbreak with **34 cases** and two deaths. It is linked to a "super-spreader event" at a Canterbury nightclub.

- **Australia (2023–2024)**: A cluster of over **40 cases** caused by a rare **Serogroup Y** strain (ST-1466) that often presents with unusual urogenital symptoms rather than typical meningitis.
- **United States (2022–2023)**: A **Serogroup Y** outbreak in Virginia (27 cases) and a **Serogroup C** outbreak in Florida primarily affecting men who have sex with men (MSM).
- **Democratic Republic of Congo (Late 2021)**: A major **Serogroup W** epidemic with over **2,500 suspected cases** and 200 deaths in a region lacking routine vaccination programs.
- **Nigeria (2023–2024)**: Recurring seasonal outbreaks in the northern states led to over **1,600 suspected cases** in early 2023.

World Health Organization (WHO) +6

Emerging Pathogens

While *Neisseria meningitidis* causes the most dramatic outbreaks, ***Streptococcus pneumoniae*** **and** ***Klebsiella pneumoniae*** **remain the leading causes of bacterial meningitis deaths globally, especially in newborns and children under five.**

National Institutes of Health (.gov) +1

Would you like to know more about the **symptoms of the unusual Serogroup Y strain** found in Australia and the US, or more about the **new Men5CV vaccine** being used in Africa?

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11 sites

- Meningitis is back – and here is why | Devi Sridhar
  17 Mar 2026 — With the restrictions on mixing and protections taken to limit spread of Covid-19 in 2020, meningitis cases dropped to record lows...
  The Guardian
- Annual Epidemiological Report for 2022 - ECDC
  22 Apr 2024 — Executive Summary * In 2022, the notification rate of IMD rose to 0.3 cases per 100 000 population, following a decline of the IMD...
  European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
- Reports - DPC Data Portal | WHO AFRO
  15 Apr 2025 — Download the Reports. ... Meningitis Report: Cases Across African Countries. This monthly data pack provides the latest provisiona...
  World Health Organization (WHO)

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where have been recorded the 2.3 million cases in 2023

The estimate of

2.3 million cases in 2023 represents the global burden of meningitis across all age groups and pathogens. [1]While the disease is present worldwide, the vast majority of these cases are concentrated in low- and middle-income regions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

Meningitis Progress Tracker +3

Distribution of Cases in 2023

The geographical recording of these cases follows established high-risk zones and post-pandemic resurgence patterns:

- **The African "Meningitis Belt"**: This region remains the global epicentre, accounting for roughly **50% of all cases and deaths**.
  - **Nigeria**: Reported **1,686 suspected cases** and **124 deaths** between October 2022 and April 2023, primarily driven by Serogroup C.
  - **Togo**: Experienced a pneumococcal meningitis outbreak with **138 reported cases** in early 2023.
- **Europe (EU/EEA)**: Recorded **1,895 confirmed cases** of Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD).
  - **France**, **Germany**, **and Spain**: Accounted for **57%** of the total cases in this region.
  - **Ireland**: Reported approximately **60 cases**, a significant portion being Serogroup B.
- **Americas**:
  - **United States**: Reported **415 cases**, largely attributed to a post-pandemic rebound of Serogroup Y.
  - **Chile**

[1] Possible contradiction of 2.5 million cases bacterial meningitis (page 12)

: Saw a rebound to **61 cases**, with increasing contributions from Serogroup W.

- **Other Noted Outbreaks**:

  - **Iraq**

    : An unusual outbreak in the Halabja Governorate involved approximately **200 children** and was primarily caused by enteroviruses.

  - **Australia**

    : Recorded a cluster of over **40 cases** linked to a rare Serogroup Y strain.

World Health Organization (WHO) +10

Key Observations for 2023

- **Highest Risk Groups**: Globally, **incidence was highest in infants under one year old, followed by children aged 1–4 and young adults aged 15–24.**
- **Pathogen Shift**: While *Neisseria meningitidis* (meningococcus) causes visible outbreaks, ***Streptococcus pneumoniae*** **(pneumococcus) remains a leading cause of bacterial meningitis cases and deaths globally**.

World Health Organization (WHO) +3

Would you like to know more about the **symptoms of the different strains** seen in these regions or how the **new vaccines** launched in 2024 target these specific areas?

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14 sites

- Global Epidemiology of Meningococcal Disease-Causing ... - PMC

  7 Nov 2024 — 1a) [48, 61, 62]. IMD cases reached a trough of 74 during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 but then rebounded to 123 in 2022, driven ...

  National Institutes of Health (.gov)

- Meningitis - Nigeria - World Health Organization (WHO)

  27 Apr 2023 — Situation at a glance. Between 1 October 2022 and 16 April 2023, Nigeria reported a total of 1686 suspected cases of meningitis, i...

  World Health Organization (WHO)

- Cases - Meningitis Progress Tracker

  What are the impacts of meningitis outbreaks and epidemics? Meningitis has the potential to cause outbreaks and epidemics – rapid ...

  Meningitis Progress Tracker

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this means that the African "Meningitis Belt" amounted to more than a million cases in 2023?

No, that is not correct. While the **global burden** of all forms of meningitis is estimated at approximately **2.3 million cases**, the number of cases specifically recorded in the **African Meningitis Belt** is much lower—typically between **25,000 and 30,000 suspected cases** annually.

Pan African Medical Journal +1

Understanding the Difference in Data

The confusion often stems from how different types of "cases" are reported:

- **Global Burden (2.3 Million)**: This is an estimated total that includes **all forms of meningitis** (bacterial, viral, fungal, and parasitic) across every country. **A large portion of this global total is comprised of childhood meningitis (1.33 million cases in children under 14).**
- **Meningitis Belt "Suspected Cases" (approx. 26,000)**: This figure refers specifically to **meningococcal**[2] **and bacterial outbreaks** reported through the WHO African Region surveillance system.

Why the Belt's Numbers are Lower Than You Might Expect

The African Meningitis Belt has seen a massive reduction in cases over the last 15 years:

1. **MenAfriVac Success**: The rollout of the Meningitis A vaccine has eliminated serogroup A epidemics, which used to cause hundreds of thousands of cases in a single season.
2. **Surveillance Focus**: Reports from the belt often focus on **epidemic-prone** bacterial meningitis during the dry season (January–June), rather than every single case of viral or sporadic meningitis that occurs year-round.
3. **2023 Specifics**: In 2023, 23 countries in the region reported a total of **17,233 suspected cases**. Nigeria, the most affected country that year, reported **1,686 suspected cases**.

World Health Organization (WHO) +5

Where the "Million" Figures Come From

The "millions" in global statistics are largely driven by:

- **Non-Epidemic Pathogens**: Bacteria like *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Haemophilus influenzae* cause a high volume of "hidden" cases globally outside of major outbreaks.
- **Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) Overall**: **While the "Belt" reports thousands of epidemic cases, the broader region of Sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to have the highest incidence rate globally (approx. 166 per 100,000 people), totalling nearly 800,000 cases in children alone when including all types of the disease.**

[2] Caused by bacteria Neisseria meningitidis

National Institutes of Health (.gov)

Would you like to see a breakdown of the **most common pathogens** currently causing these cases in Africa compared to Europe?

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- Towards an African Region free of meningitis epidemics by 2030
  26 Aug 2025 — Towards an African Region free of meningitis epidemics by 2030: vision, progress, challenges and future directions * Introduction:
  Pan African Medical Journal

- Meningitis affects around 2.3 million people globally every year and ...
  21 Mar 2025 — Africa has a “meningitis belt” that stretches ... are most at risk of vaccine-preventable diseases receive the protection they nee...
  www.facebook.com
- Meningitis - Nigeria - World Health Organization (WHO)
  27 Apr 2023 — Situation at a glance. Between 1 October 2022 and 16 April 2023, Nigeria reported a total of 1686 suspected cases of meningitis, i...
  World Health Organization (WHO)

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yes, I would like a situation of all cases of meningitis (no matter the cause) for each continent (including Africa) in 2023

In 2023, the global situation of meningitis was characterized by a significant rebound following the COVID-19 pandemic. **While total cases across all causes (bacterial, viral, fungal, and parasitic) were estimated at 2.3 million globally, the reported numbers for specific continents vary by surveillance focus.**

National Institutes of Health (.gov) +1

2023 Meningitis Cases by Continent

Continent	Recorded Cases (2023)	Key Details
Africa	**~26,000 suspected**	Primarily bacterial outbreaks in the "Meningitis Belt". Nigeria alone reported **1,686 cases**. Africa bears the highest burden of severe bacterial cases.
Asia	**~200,000+**	High numbers of reported cases in specific countries like

	reported	**Pakistan** **(77,714)**, **Syria** **(53,080)**, and **Bangladesh** **(34,060)**. Iraq noted a shift toward viral meningitis as the predominant type.
Europe	**~1,895 (IMD only)**	This figure reflects only **Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD)** across 30 EU/EEA countries. France , Germany , and Spain accounted for 57% of these cases.
North America	**~415 (US only)**	The US experienced a post-pandemic rebound in IMD, primarily driven by **Serogroup Y**.
Oceania	**~40+ (Australia)**	Australia recorded an outbreak of a rare Serogroup Y strain (ST-1466) in mid-2023.
South America	**~61 (Chile)**	Provisional data showed a rebound in IMD cases in Chile , with a rising contribution from Serogroup W.

{Total 228,441 cases– with indicated limitations, in comparison to 2.3 million}

Summary by Cause

- **Bacterial Meningitis**: Remains the most dangerous form, with the highest concentration of epidemic-prone strains (Neisseria meningitidis) in the **African Meningitis Belt**. In 2023, Serogroup C and W were the predominant bacterial strains in this region.
- **Viral Meningitis**: Typically causes more frequent but less severe cases. For instance,

Ireland

reported **318 cases** of viral meningitis in 2023, mostly caused by enteroviruses. In some Asian countries like

Iraq

, viral meningitis has recently exceeded bacterial cases.

- **Fungal/Parasitic Meningitis**: These are much rarer and often linked to specific health conditions or environmental exposures. Cryptococcal (fungal) meningitis **remains a significant cause of death among adults with compromised immune systems in parts of Africa.**

Pan African Medical Journal +4

Would you like to know more about the **symptoms of viral versus bacterial meningitis** or how **vaccination programs** differ between these continents?

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10 sites

- Meningococcal Meningitis - Africa CDC
  Meningococcal meningitis is a bacterial form of meningitis, a serious infection of the thin lining that surrounds the brain and sp...
  Africa CDC
- Global Epidemiology of Meningococcal Disease-Causing ... - PMC
  7 Nov 2024 — In the United States, preliminary serogroup distribution data for 2022 and 2023 indicate that the post-pandemic rebound is largely...
  National Institutes of Health (.gov)
- Frequency of the pathogens causing bacterial and fungal meningitis...
  Objective Determine the meningitis trend in Iraq from 2007 to 2023 using a joinpoint regression at national and sub-national level...
  ResearchGate

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What is the type of meningitis that the actual vaccines can deal with?

Most current vaccines focus on bacterial meningitis, specifically the types that cause large, deadly outbreaks. They do not protect against viral, fungal, or parasitic forms of the disease.

The vaccines are generally categorized by the specific bacteria they target:

1. Meningococcal Vaccines (The "Big Five")

These protect against the *Neisseria meningitidis* bacteria. There are two main types of shots:

- **MenACWY**: Protects against four "serogroups" (A, C, W, and Y). This is the standard shot for teenagers and travelers.
- **MenB**: Specifically targets Serogroup B. This is the strain currently causing the **Kent, UK outbreak** and is common in Ireland and the US.

- **Men5CV (The New "5-in-1")**: Launched in **Nigeria in 2024**, this is the first single shot to cover all five major strains (**A, C, W, Y, and X**) in one go.

2. Pneumococcal Vaccines (PCV)

These protect against *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (Pneumococcus). **This bacteria is actually the leading cause of bacterial meningitis globally, especially in infants and the elderly.**

- Common versions include **PCV13**, **PCV15**, and **PCV20**, which cover the most common "types" of this bacteria.

3. Hib Vaccine

Protects against *Haemophilus influenzae* type b. Before this vaccine was introduced in routine childhood immunizations, Hib was the most common cause of bacterial meningitis in children under five. It has been virtually eliminated in many countries thanks to the vaccine.

What Vaccines Don't Cover

- **Viral Meningitis**: There is no specific "meningitis vaccine" for viruses. However, being vaccinated against **Measles, Mumps, and Chickenpox (MMR/Varicella)** prevents the infections that often lead to viral meningitis.

- **Other Bacteria: They do not protect against *Listeria* or *E. coli*, which can cause meningitis in newborns or people with weak immune systems.**

Are you checking to see which **specific vaccines** are included in your country's routine **childhood schedule**?

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I would like a situation of all deaths of meningitis (no matter the cause of meningitis) for each continent (including Africa) and in total, in 2023

In 2023, meningitis deaths remained a major global health challenge, with the vast majority concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa. **Globally,**
an estimated 230,000 to 300,000 people die from all forms of meningitis annually.

The International Society for Infectious Diseases +2

While comprehensive "all-cause" death totals for every continent are often reported with a time lag, the following reflects the documented situation for 2023 based on available surveillance data.

2023 Meningitis Deaths by Continent

Continent	Recorded/Est. Deaths (2023)	Context & Specific Data
Africa	**~140,000+** **{vs 25,000 deaths in**	Africa accounts for the highest global burden. In the "Meningitis Belt" alone, outbreaks in

	1996-7 outbreak & vs 1100-1500 deaths in 2009 outb}	**Nigeria** caused 124 deaths by mid-April, while **Niger** reported 18 deaths in the Zinder region early in the year.
Europe	**~200**	This figure represents **Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD)** deaths across 30 EU/EEA countries. Group B was the dominant fatal strain.
Asia	**Hundreds (Recorded)**	Surveillance is often fragmented. **Afghanistan** reported 7 deaths and **Syria** reported 7 deaths in early 2023 clusters. Most Asian deaths are caused by sporadic bacterial and viral cases rather than large epidemics.
North America	**~150–300**	Annual average for the **United States**. A significant 2023 rebound was linked to a rare Serogroup Y strain.
Oceania	**Minimal**	Australia recorded an outbreak of Serogroup Y with a "relatively high case-fatality rate," though total annual deaths remained low.
South America	**Minimal {Total: less than 142,000 vs 300,000 deaths globally}**	Countries like **Chile** saw a resurgence in cases (61 recorded), but total fatalities remained low compared to other regions.

Global Mortality Overview

- **Total Global Deaths: Estimated at ~236,000 based on the Global Burden of Disease** (2019 baseline) with 2023 seeing a resurgence in cases post-pandemic.
- **Case Fatality Rate**: Bacterial meningitis remains the deadliest form. Even with treatment, **5% to 10%** of patients die. Without treatment, the mortality rate can reach **50%**.
- **High-Risk Age Group**: Nearly **half of all deaths** occur in children under 5 years of age.

Leading Causes of Death in 2023

While *Neisseria meningitidis* (meningococcus) causes visible outbreaks, *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (pneumococcus) and *Haemophilus influenzae* are responsible for a high volume of the estimated 2.3 million cases and subsequent deaths globally.

World Health Organization (WHO) +1

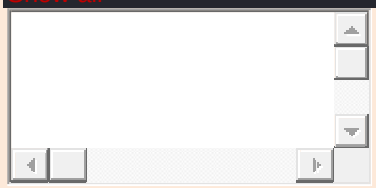
Are you interested in how the WHO's "Defeating Meningitis by 2030" roadmap aims to reduce these **mortality figures** by 70%?

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13 sites

- Global Epidemiology of Meningococcal Disease-Causing ... - PMC
  7 Nov 2024 — In the United States, preliminary serogroup distribution data for 2022 and 2023 indicate that the post-pandemic rebound is largely...
  National Institutes of Health (.gov)
- Today's disease topics - ECDC
  29 Apr 2023 — Asia: Afghanistan: Since 25 February 2023 and as of 20 March 2023, 3 156 new cases have been reported. Since 1 January 2023 and as...
  European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
- Bacterial Meningitis: A Global Public Health Challenge - ISID
  5 Oct 2023 — influenzae and GBS. In the face of the challenging scenario of meningitis as a major global public-health threat, coordinated effo...
  The International Society for Infectious Diseases

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