



World Birth Defects Day Advocacy Toolkit

#WorldBDDay

TOP-LINE MESSAGES

- Birth defects, also known as congenital anomalies, are common, costly, and critical.
- Worldwide, all countries and their populations are affected by birth defects, but the toll is particularly high in low- and middle-resource countries. Click [here](#) to learn more about the global distribution of birth defects.
- Birth defects are a major cause of stillbirth and neonatal mortality.
- Those who survive with birth defects may suffer a lifetime of disability. These children and adults need good healthcare services to improve their quality of life and allow them to participate in society.
- Many birth defects can be prevented by taking appropriate measures before and during pregnancy.
- There is a need to establish national surveillance systems to get accurate national, regional and global estimates of birth defects.
- There is a need to advocate for policy and resource support for research aimed at finding causes of birth defects, for prevention programs and for improving care of those affected.

THINGS YOU CAN DO

1. Publicize WBDD on your website.
 - Showcase the WBDD logo on your website's home page. Attached for your convenience.
 - Create your own WBDD page on your website or use your Facebook page to disseminate the information and documents you want disseminate. [Example](#)
2. Add the WBDD logo in your email signature.
3. Be active on social media.
 - Use various social media platforms to promote WBDD. We encourage you and your affiliates, and partner organizations to use or create a personal or organization/institutional account on one or more social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, other). At least Twitter is strongly recommended.
 - A presentation on "Use of New Media for Public Health Messaging" can be viewed [here](#); click [here](#) for a brief introduction to the *use of social media for health promotion*.
 - Follow on Twitter the WBDD participating organizations, their representatives and affiliates. Search for the hashtag #WorldBDDay (not case sensitive).
 - Post your own message on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn adding #WorldBDDay (See *examples of social media messaging on Appendix 1.*)
 - Retweet, favorite, and comment partners' tweets on Twitter, and leave a comment to partners' post on Facebook in order to stimulate the discussion and the dissemination.
 - Support the WBDD Thunderclap Campaign. (See *how in Appendix*): <http://po.st/WBDD17>
 - Participate in the Buzzday on March 3, 2017. (See *how in Appendix 3.*)

4. Disseminate information about your own activities or about birth defects in general.
 - Write an article for a newspaper or a magazine.
 - Organize a press conference. Google provides several websites to help you to do a press conference; search on Google the key words “how to do a press conference.”
 - Organize a scientific event (e.g., conference, workshop, lecture or a more general conference).
 - Organize a social event (e.g., marathon, tournament, dinner).
 - Disseminate a pin button, flyers or posters to participants in events you are organizing or in which you are involved (and please be respectful with the environment).
 - Use the logo of the World Birth Defects Day in your materials and documents.
5. Track your activities for the inclusion in the 2017 WBDD Report.
 - Post on social media one or more pictures of your services, clinics and facilities and post them with real, relevant and unique information.
 - Post on social media one or more pictures of the events you have organized or any other relevant document you have produced to observe the WBDD.
 - Send the relevant material to centre@icbdsr.org to prepare the 2017 WBDD as we did for 2016 WBDD. (Click [here](#) to see the 2016 WBDD Report.).
6. Visit the WBDD [page](#) for updated information and press releases.
7. Try to engage others to be a Participating Organization for the 2017 World Birth Defects Day.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOUR MESSAGES AND COMMUNICATION

Use these links to develop your own material:

World Health Organization

- http://www.who.int/topics/congenital_anomalies/en/
- http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/documents/concensus_preconception_care/en/
- http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/guidelines/optimalserum_rbc_womenrep_tubedefects/en/

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/index.html>

March of Dimes Foundation

- <http://www.marchofdimes.org/complications/birth-defects-and-health-conditions.aspx#>

National Birth Defects Prevention Network

- http://www.nbdpn.org/national_birth_defects_prevent.php?navtitle=idxpubs?navtitle=idxpubs

Questions and Ideas? Contact us at centre@icbdsr.org

Example Facebook Posts

- Join us on March 3 to promote World Birth Defects Day to raise awareness of birth defects and expand birth defects surveillance, prevention, care and research worldwide. #WorldBDDay
- Birth defects affect around 6% of births and result in approximately 8.1 million birth defect-related disabilities every year #WorldBDDay
- Worldwide, an estimated 303,000 newborns die during the first 28 days of life every year from birth defects. #WorldBDDay
- Birth defects may result in long-term disability, which places a significant burden on individuals, families, healthcare systems and societies. #WorldBDDay
- The most common and severe birth defects are heart defects, neural tube defects and Down syndrome. #WorldBDDay
- Although birth defects may be genetic, infectious or environmental in origin, most often it is difficult to identify the exact causes. #WorldBDDay
- Many birth defects can be prevented. For example, rubella vaccination, adequate intake of folic acid and iodine, and adequate preconception and antenatal care are keys for prevention. #WorldBDDay

Example tweets:

- Join us March 3 to promote World Birth Defects Day to improve prevention and research worldwide. #WorldBDDay
- Did you know that 1 in 100 newborns has a heart defect? #WorldBDDay
- Birth defects affect around 6% of births and result in approximately 8.1 million birth defect-related disabilities every year #WorldBDDay
- I'm ready to raise awareness on March 3 because birth defects are common, critical and costly! #WorldBDDay
- Too few countries have a birth defects surveillance program. Why not in all countries? #WorldBDDay
- On March 3 let's spread the word – every child born w a birth defect has the right to have a full & happy life. #WorldBDDay
- An estimated 303,000 newborns die during the first 28 days of life every year from birth defects.#WorldBDDay

Tips:

- Do not forget to disseminate posts and tweets not only through your institutional accounts on social media, but also through your personal accounts.
- To be sure that specific friends see your messaging from your account, tag them in the tweet (Twitter) or in the post (Facebook). Do this by typing '@' then their name in the text. A drop-down menu will appear that allows you to choose from your list of friends. Friends you tag in your tweet/post will receive a notification. Tagging friends from similar friend-groups in the same message is a great way to get a particular group motivated to help out!

- Make sure to include #WorldBDDay in your messaging. Whenever you add the #WorldBDDay hashtag to your post/tweet, it is immediately indexed by the social network and searchable by other users. Once someone clicks on that hashtag, they'll be brought to a page that aggregates all of the posts with the same hashtagged keyword in real-time.

Appendix 2

Thunderclap

We need you to spread the word by joining the Thunderclap for World Birth Defects Day. Thunderclap is a crowd-speaking platform that will help amplify our mission to fight raise awareness of birth defects with the power of a crowd. When you join today, Thunderclap will post a one-time message at 10 a.m. ET on March 3 to your social media account of choice. You can join us by using your Facebook, Twitter or Tumblr account or all three! With your help, we can reach more people and raise awareness about the global crisis of birth defects. Sign up for Thunderclap [here!](#) In 2016, the Thunderclap allowed us to reach to 4,833,519 people worldwide simultaneously on March 3!

Appendix 3

Buzzday

On March 3, share your story about the impact of birth defects on you, your child or someone you know. With our partners, we'll be urging policymakers, researchers, health care providers and citizens across the globe to help improve birth defects surveillance, prevention, care, and research by global communities and countries. We need you to join in as well!

Here are two actions you can take to promote Buzzday in social media:

1. Post an announcement on your Facebook account/page/group, on Twitter or other social media accounts, on your blog or discussion group, on any social media platform using #WorldBDDay.
 - a. **Sample post:** An estimated 303,000 newborns die during the first 28 days of life every year from birth defects. Help us raise awareness about World Birth Defects Day on March 3 #WorldBDDay
 - b. **Sample tweet:** Over 300,000 newborns die in the first 28 days of life every year from birth defects. Help raise awareness on March 3 #WorldBDDay
2. Join the Buzzday on Twitter on March 3. Plan to send one or more messages using #WorldBDDay at some point during the day. Retweet both promotional and day-of messages to build the buzz for the day.

We look forward to having you join the conversation. Together, we can make strides to improve knowledge and raise awareness!