

Why a *World Birth Defects Day* Movement?

Started in 2015, World Birth Defects Day (WBDD), observed on March 3 each year, unites people and organizations working in the field of birth defects, also known as congenital anomalies, congenital disorders or congenital conditions. There are many types of birth defects and this Day recognizes all birth defects (**#manybirhtdefects1voice**).

Although started as an annual event, this day has now become a movement. **WBDD movement** is needed because significant improvement in birth defects prevention and care will result only if a critical mass of many global and country-based or region-based organizations engage actively, not only in the few days around March 3, but also during the whole year. **This is a movement which is not bound by time or geography – it's global and ongoing!**

Resources

www.worldbirthdefectsday.org is the platform/home for resources and information related to this movement. **On social media, see @wbdday and hashtags #worldbdday, #manybirthdefects1voice, #birthdefects, #congenitalanomalies.**

What is the aim of the WBDD Movement?

The overarching aim of the WBDD Movement is advocating for improving:

- Prevention of birth defects
- Care of all individuals with any birth defect and related disabilities
- Knowledge of the burden and causes of birth defects through epidemiologic and basic research

Who should partner in this movement?

Any of the following organizations working for improving the health of children with a birth defects, women, and men with an impact on the prenatal development can join this movement. Here some examples:

- Parents/patients associations
- Academic institutions
- Research institutes
- Maternal-child health hospitals or services (even small or part of them), public or private
- Epidemiology programs, including birth defects registries
- Public health agencies
- Ministries of health, research and innovation, and other governmental agencies
- Not for profit organizations / nongovernmental organizations (NGO)
- Foundations
- International agencies (e.g., UNICEF, WHO)

What is the first priority?

The first priority is to increase the visibility of birth defects and disseminate what is already known on how to prevent birth defects and how to improve health and quality of life of affected individuals. This should be available everywhere, in every country of the world and in every social group of a particular country. Wide dissemination of knowledge is only the first step. Then, effort to implement what is known need to be accelerated in all regions of the world as many birth defects can be prevented and those living with birth defects can be supported to reach their optimal status of wellbeing.

How to disseminate what is already known?

There are several strategies to disseminate evidence-based knowledge useful in health promotion.

The cheapest and most feasible way is to **use web resources: your organization website and social media.**

Websites have the advantages to give the widest, deepest and long lasting information. Social media have the advantages to be easy to access and have the greatest utility when are linked to an informative document.

Other strategies to disseminate knowledge are also welcome, but if the costs were a problem, let us start with the web resources.

What Partners of the WBDD Movement can do to disseminate what is already known?

1. **If your organization does not yet have a website, set up it.** Information on website is always easily available to the users, much more than in Facebook page, for example.
2. **Post the WBDD logo in own web.** The WBDD logo will remain **permanently** in home page or in a specific page of the web. The WBDD logo will have a link to the WBDD web <https://www.worldbirthdefectsday.org/>.
3. **Help increase the number of Partners in every Country/Region.** Being part of a critical mass of Partners has many advantages, particularly when you want to have more visibility and when you need a large collaboration to realize your programs. Reach out to other potential Partners in your City/Region/Country and encourage them to join by applying at <https://www.worldbirthdefectsday.org/application-form/> *There is no deadline.*
4. **Have a specific page dedicated to birth defects in your website** In that specific page you should have *your own informational resources* on main topic of care and prevention of birth defects. **As a template** you can use what is already available (see examples in appendix)

Last, but the most important

5. **Organize opportunities e.g.,** meeting (even small - without any cost), workshop, conference, training course, **to increase the knowledge** on birth defects prevention and/or care for **target groups** such as:
 - a) Professionals
 - b) Parents-to-be (target of prevention of birth defects),
 - c) Parents of children / adolescents with a birth defects
 - d) Adult with a birth defect

Conclusion

Being a Partner of WBDD Movement means that you are not alone. You will become an important part of a large community. You can be instrumental to help a colleague, you can ask advices, and in any case your participation, even if minimal, increases the critical mass needed to reach the aims.

See the full list of Partners of WBDD Movement at <https://www.worldbirthdefectsday.org/partners/>

Appendix

Informational resources on birth defects - Examples

Link to selected websites where you can find fact sheets to be used as a template

More suggestions are welcomed. Send them to
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Specific Birth Defects

Twenty-six fact sheets are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/types.html>

Preventing Birth Defects

General

Commit to Healthy Choices to Help Prevent Birth Defects
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/prevention.html>

Folic Acid

Folic Acid Recommendations | CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/folicacid/recommendations.html>

Medications

Factsheets on Medications | MotherToBaby
<https://mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets-parent/>

Treating for Two | CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<https://www.cdc.gov/pregnancy/meds/treatingfortwo/index.html>

Vaccinations

Flu Vaccine Safety and Pregnancy | CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/qa_vacpregnant.htm

Get the Whooping Cough Vaccine While You Are Pregnant | CDC
<http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/pregnant/mom/get-vaccinated.html>

Vaccinations and Pregnancy | March of Dimes
<https://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/vaccinations-during-pregnancy.aspx>