

Join the race to

2030

Supporting advocates in the race to defeat meningitis

## Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance

An overview of the partnership and its role in defeating meningitis

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance is a **global health partnership**. It brings together governments, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the World Bank, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, research and technical agencies, the vaccine industry and civil society.

It aims to support governments in [lower-income countries](#) to strengthen their healthcare systems and improve access to vaccines that protect against 20 infectious diseases, including meningitis.

### What's the difference between vaccination and immunisation?

**Vaccination** refers to the process of receiving a vaccination, to protect you against a disease.

**Immunisation** is the process by which a person becomes resistant to an infectious disease (usually through vaccination).



### Who funds Gavi?

Countries are expected to [co-finance vaccines](#) with Gavi. As a country's national income grows, they finance a larger and larger percentage of their vaccines. So far, 19 countries have transitioned to self-financing their immunisation programmes.

Beyond country financing, Gavi receives funding from a [range of donor governments, organisations and individuals](#).

In 2024, Gavi published its strategy for 2026-2030 and the funding required to achieve its goals. Learn more about the Investment Opportunity and what it means for meningitis [in this quick-read](#).



### Why was Gavi established?

Gavi was established in 2000, with the goal of improving access to life-saving vaccines. The partnership encourages manufacturers to reduce vaccine prices for lower-income countries in return for long-term, high-volume and predictable demand.



### How does Gavi work?

Gavi does not deliver vaccines itself. Instead, the partnership works by harnessing its members' expertise:

- WHO supports Ministries of Health to make decisions on what vaccines to use and when.
- UNICEF's supply division is responsible for negotiating the purchase of vaccines from manufacturers.
- The World Bank gives strategic financial advice.

With this support, country governments take the lead. Gavi funded vaccines reach the communities that need them through national health care systems, supported by civil society organisations.



### Where does Gavi work?

Gavi supports lower-income countries who may otherwise struggle to afford to vaccinate their populations. Countries are eligible for support if their gross national income is below an annually defined figure.

In 2024, 54 countries qualified for support – including all 26 countries in the African Meningitis Belt. The Meningitis Belt is an area of sub-Saharan Africa which experiences the highest burden of disease and is at increased risk of meningitis outbreaks.

**Gavi is responsible for vaccinating more than half the world's children.**



## How is Gavi helping to defeat meningitis?

Gavi-supported meningococcal A vaccine campaigns have reached millions of children and young adults in the African Meningitis Belt. Before the vaccine was introduced, 80–85% of meningitis epidemics in the region were caused by **meningococcal meningitis** type A. By 2021, following mass vaccination campaigns, [incidence dropped by 99%](#).

Men5CV is a new vaccine that protects against **meningococcal meningitis** type A, C, Y, W and X, with a single dose. Supported by Gavi, [the vaccine was rolled out in 2024 to tackle a deadly outbreak in Nigeria and is now included within the global stockpile](#).

Gavi support has helped countries immunise more than 215 million children across 60 lower-income countries against **pneumococcal bacteria**, which is a leading cause of meningitis.

Pentavalent vaccine coverage in the 57 Gavi-supported countries increased from [0% in 2000 to 81% in 2022](#). The Pentavalent vaccine protects against five major diseases, including **Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)**. Hib is a deadly bacterium that can cause meningitis, pneumonia and septicaemia. By the end of 2022, more than 705 million children had been immunised with three doses of the Gavi-funded pentavalent vaccine.

In 2021, [Gavi approved funding to support a diagnostics programme](#) that includes **meningococcal meningitis** and aims to improve disease surveillance, outbreak detection and response.

### Join the Race to 2030

Are you a civil society organisation or activist who is passionate about seeing meningitis defeated?

Stay informed and join the Race to 2030 movement. Find out more [here](#).



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[meningitis.org](http://meningitis.org)



Notes: This explainer has been created by Meningitis Research Foundation and sets out our current understanding of Gavi and its role in defeating meningitis. This guide has been created for CoMo members and other civil society organisations to support activists around the world in engaging with and advocating for the vision of the WHO Global Road Map to Defeat Meningitis by 2030.