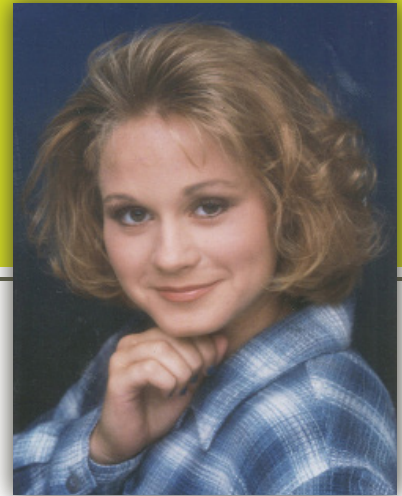


MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS

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How Meningitis Took My Daughter



Meet my daughter Jolie Crider. This picture was when Jolie was 13 years old, and she asked to have some “glamor shots” taken. I am so grateful to have them because these are now the only photos I have that are somewhat like “senior pictures.” Jolie never got to have her senior photos taken because Jolie died the following year.

At the age of only 14, my daughter Jolie died from meningococcal meningitis. That was May 7th, 1998, when there was no vaccine for this awful disease; Jolie never had a fighting chance. Meningitis took her life quickly.

The night before she passed away, Jolie was a healthy girl playing softball with her high school softball team. Then, in the morning, we were at the doctor’s office complaining of nausea and a temperature of 101°F. I asked the physician if this could be meningitis, and after checking for the common symptoms like rash and a stiff neck, they sent us home with a dose of Phenergan, an Antihistamine, and Antiemetic. Jolie slept for about two hours. When she awoke, she told me she took things from her bedroom up to heaven with her. I immediately phoned the doctor and was told it was probably “the Phenergan talking.” I know differently now.

That evening, Jolie began vomiting and had a severe headache. I took her to the emergency room where she presented with a temperature of 97°F, and again I asked if this could be meningitis. After checking for a rash and stiff neck, they did some blood work and were going to send us home. While we were waiting for the blood work Jolie, unbeknownst to us, had a seizure. Her white count was off the charts, and they rushed her in for a CT Scan, where we learned that she had had a seizure and stopped breathing.

Jolie was helicoptered to Riley Children’s Hospital, where she was declared brain dead. It wasn’t until the day after her life support was turned off that we learned Jolie died from meningitis. Believe me, when I say, *there is nothing worse than losing a child!*

But, today, tragedies like these can be avoided with vaccines. If I had the opportunity to have protected Jolie with a vaccine, I would have done so without a second thought!

Parents, please, don’t let this be you — Vaccinate your children!

There are 300-500 cases of Meningococcal Meningitis in the US each year,* and 1 out of 9 persons die. Adolescents and young adults are at a higher risk to contract the disease. Up to 20% of survivors have long-term, serious disabilities including brain damage, limb amputations, organ damage, and hearing loss.

Meningococcal Meningitis is a rare, but deadly bacterial infection that is spread through respiratory droplets (coughing, sneezing, and kissing). It is hard to diagnose, and if left untreated, can progress rapidly.

Fortunately, most cases of meningitis that occur in the US can be prevented by receiving a safe and effective vaccine. The vaccine is recommended for all 11 and 12 year olds, with a booster dose at age 16. In addition, the Meningitis B vaccine can be given at age 16 to 18, ideally before entering college. Many Indiana colleges are requiring the Meningitis and Meningitis B vaccines for college entry. Others with high risk conditions should also receive these vaccines.

**Ask your doctor about the Meningococcal vaccine.
For more information, visit vaccinateindiana.org**

*cdc.gov/meningococcal/surveillance/index.html

