



# GET IN THE GAME

KEEPING TEENS HEALTHY

Powered by Voices of Meningitis™

# Playbook



# THE PLAYING FIELD

When it comes to high school sports, parents do all they can to protect their kids from harm – from purchasing the right equipment to researching the best protective gear. But, there is one thing parents might be forgetting to guard their children against – meningococcal disease – a serious bacterial infection that includes meningitis, swelling of the tissues around the brain and spinal cord, bacteremia, a severe blood infection, or pneumonia.<sup>1</sup>

Meningococcal meningitis is a disease that can be difficult to diagnose, especially in its early stages, because symptoms are similar to those of common viral illnesses, such as the flu.<sup>2</sup> However, meningococcal disease is very serious. Meningococcal disease develops rapidly and can claim the life of an otherwise healthy individual in as little as one day after the first symptoms appear. Data show that 10 to 15 percent of the 800 to 1,200 Americans who get meningococcal disease each year will pass away from the disease.<sup>3,4</sup> Of those who survive, nearly one in five are left with serious medical problems, including:<sup>5,6</sup>

- Amputation of arms, legs, fingers, or toes
- Neurologic damage
- Deafness
- Kidney damage

## ABOUT *Get in the Game*

*Get in the Game* is a national campaign powered by Voices of Meningitis™ to help educate parents on the danger and prevention of meningococcal meningitis, and motivate them to speak with their children's health care provider about a meningococcal vaccine in advance of sports season.

# THE TEAM

As part of the *Get in the Game* campaign, champions for vaccination have come together to form *Team Voices*. Members include:

## Dara Torres

*12-time Olympic Medalist*

*Mother*

*National Get in the Game Campaign Ambassador*

Olympic medalist and mom Dara Torres is arguably the fastest female swimmer in America – she has competed in five Olympic Games and has won 12 medals in her Olympic career. But, more than being an elite swimmer, Dara is a mom and her children's health and well-being are her top priorities. That is why she joined *Get in the Game*, a national campaign powered by *Voices of Meningitis™*, to help educate parents on the danger and prevention of meningococcal meningitis, and to motivate them to speak with their children's doctor about meningococcal vaccination in advance of sports season. For more information on meningococcal disease and the *Get in the Game* Campaign, visit [www.Facebook.com/VoicesOfMeningitis](http://www.Facebook.com/VoicesOfMeningitis).

Dara is known for becoming the oldest swimmer to compete in the Games at the Beijing Olympics in 2008. She took three silver medals home, including the medal she won following the infamous, heartbreaking 50-meter freestyle race where she missed the gold by 1/100th of a second.

Aside from her accomplishments in the pool, Dara is a top-selling author. She is the author of "Age is Just a Number: Achieve Your Dreams At Any Stage In Your Life" and "Gold Medal Fitness: A Revolutionary Five Week Program," both of which made The New York Times best-seller list.

Additionally, Dara was the first female athlete ever to be featured in the *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue, and in 2009, won the ESPY award for "Best Comeback." To add to Dara's accolades, she was also named one of the "Top Female Athletes of the Decade" by *Sports Illustrated* magazine.



# THE TEAM

## Beth Matthey

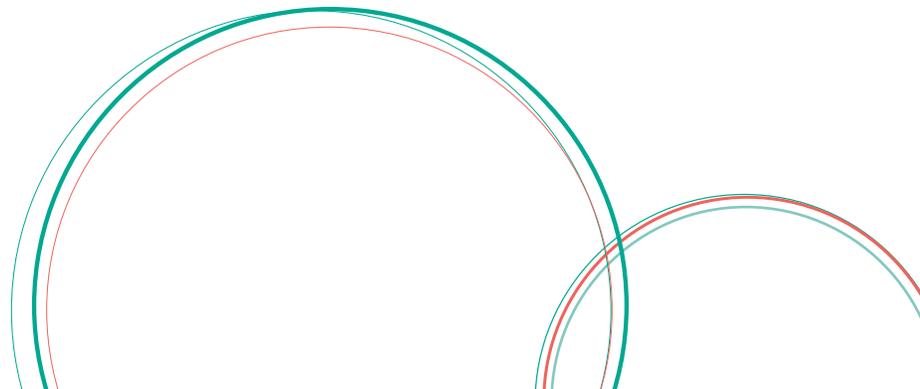
*MSN, RN, NCSN*

*President-Elect, National Association of School Nurses  
National Get in the Game Campaign Ambassador*



Beth Matthey, MSN, RN, NCSN has been a school nurse in the Brandywine School District for 26 years. She has worked with elementary students, high school students and students with special needs. As a school nurse, she is an advocate for vaccinations and boosters to help ensure the health of children.

Beth is a past president of the Delaware School Nurse Association and past board member of the National Association of School Nurses. She will be installed as President-Elect for the National Association of School Nurses in June 2013. In addition, she is an instructor at the University of Delaware, author and presenter.



# THE TEAM

## Jamie Schanbaum

*Paralympic Cyclist*

*Survivor*

*National Get in the Game Campaign Ambassador*

In November 2008, 20-year-old Jamie Schanbaum almost lost her life to a serious, yet potentially vaccine-preventable bacterial infection called meningococcal septicemia. Jamie survived the disease, but will endure lifetime consequences as a result.

Doctors had to amputate both of Jamie's legs below her knees and most of her fingers on both hands. Jamie remained in the hospital for more than six months and had several months of painstaking surgery, recuperation and rehabilitation, including learning how to walk on her prosthetics. Despite the challenges, Jamie endured her trials and surpassed all expectations.

While Jamie's mother had vaccinated all her children with recommended vaccines, she was not informed or educated about the risks of meningococcal disease or that a potentially life-saving vaccine existed. To help prevent other families from experiencing this potentially devastating disease, the Schanbaums joined the fight against meningitis.

In 2009, The Jamie Schanbaum Act was passed in the State of Texas, making it mandatory for college students living in dormitories to be vaccinated against meningococcal meningitis. In 2011, the law was amended - The Jamie Schanbaum/Nicolis Williams Act was created after the unfortunate death of Texas A&M Student Nicolis Williams to mandate that all entering students be vaccinated. Jamie and her family have now created a non-profit organization called The J.A.M.I.E. Group (Joint Advocacy for Meningococcal Information & Education) with the mission to help Jamie share her experience and knowledge, and to inform and educate others about this disease.



# THE TEAM

## Rayna DuBose

*Division I Basketball Scholar*

*Survivor*

*National Get in the Game Campaign Ambassador*



Rayna DuBose, a highly recruited student, was granted a full athletic scholarship to play Division I Women's Basketball at Virginia Tech starting fall 2001. In April 2002, Rayna's life forever changed when she was struck with meningococcal meningitis, which led to 96 days in the University of Virginia Medical Center. In a coma with organ failure, including liver problems and non-functioning kidneys that had her on dialysis, Rayna fought for her life. She won – but not before losing all four of her limbs to amputation because of the disease.

After more than a year of painful recovery, Rayna returned to Virginia Tech. She remained an active student, taking online classes and serving as a student assistant coach on Virginia Tech Women's Basketball team, still traveling and being a part of the team. She graduated in Spring 2007.

Rayna has been recognized with many prestigious awards in sports, including the "Most Courageous Award" at the Men's Final Four (2003); the Women's Sports Foundation's "Wilma Rudolph Courage Award" (2005); the National Ethnic Coalition Organization "Congressional Ellis Island Medal of Honor" (2009); and the McDonald's "Athlete of the Day for the Military Paralympics" (2009).

Rayna has appeared on HBO Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel, CBS Sports, the CBS Early Show, and local news stations.

Today, Rayna tours the United States discussing priorities in life, determination, perseverance and never giving up. She hopes to continue to spread the smile that she wears everyday with others.

# THE PLAY

Many sports programs require student athletes to schedule a physical before the season starts. Having parents ask about a booster – which is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) but not required in many states – is a critical step in ensuring teens are protected during one of the peak ages of increased meningococcal disease risk.<sup>7</sup>

To help protect against meningococcal disease, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends routine vaccination of adolescents aged 11 through 18 years (a single dose of vaccine should be administered at age 11 or 12 years, with a booster dose at age 16 years for children who receive the first dose before age 16 years).<sup>8</sup>



## Background on meningococcal meningitis

Meningococcal meningitis is spread through respiratory droplets and direct contact with respiratory secretions.<sup>9</sup> Common everyday activities can spread meningococcal disease, including kissing; sharing utensils and water bottles; and being in close quarters, such as living in a dormitory or staying at a sleep-away summer camp.<sup>10,11</sup> Athletes can be at greater risk of exposure to meningococcal disease, since many sports involve physical contact and equipment sharing. Group practice, cramped locker rooms and long bus trips to games could add to contraction risk.<sup>12,13</sup> Fatigue may also put people at greater risk of meningococcal disease, possibly by weakening the immune system.<sup>14</sup>

## About Voices of Meningitis™

The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) and Sanofi Pasteur are working together on the Voices of Meningitis campaign, now in its 5th year, to help prevent children and teens from contracting meningococcal meningitis.

For more information, visit [www.Facebook.com/VoicesofMeningitis](http://www.Facebook.com/VoicesofMeningitis)

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# Voices of Meningitis™ Reporter's Glossary of Terms

**Bacterium (plural: bacteria)** – a single-celled microorganism that contains its own nucleic acid (DNA or RNA) and can replicate by itself<sup>1</sup>

**Bacteremia** – the presence of bacteria in the bloodstream, which can either resolve without treatment or result in an infection causing a fever or more serious complications, like septicemia<sup>2,3</sup>

**Booster vaccine (or shot)** – an additional vaccination given to sustain the immune response against an infectious agent<sup>4</sup>

**Meninges (mĕn-in'jĕz)** – a protective layer consisting of three fibrous membranes that surrounds the brain and spinal cord<sup>5,6</sup>

**Meningitis** – a disease characterized by inflammation of the meninges usually caused by a bacterial or viral infection of the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord<sup>7</sup>

**Meningococemia (mĕ-nĭng'gō-kōk-sĕ'mĕ-ə)** – a life-threatening infection of the blood caused by *N. meningitides*<sup>8</sup>

**Meningococcal (muh-ning-goh-KOK-al) disease** – a spectrum of infections caused by the bacterium called *Neisseria meningitides* (or *N. meningitides*) and includes meningitis, bacteremia or pneumonia<sup>9</sup>

**Meningococcal meningitis** – a serious bacterial infection and the most common presentation of meningococcal disease that includes swelling of the tissues surrounding the brain and spinal cord<sup>10</sup>

**Nasopharynx** – the most superior portion of the three regions of the throat, or pharynx, situated behind the nose and extending from the posterior nares to the level of the soft palate<sup>11</sup>

***Neisseria meningitides* (ni-sĕr'e-ah mĕn'in-jĭt'i-dĭs)** – a bacterium, also known as meningococcus, that causes meningococcal disease and grows on mucosal surfaces of the nasopharynx. The organism can be spread through respiratory droplets or direct contact with respiratory secretions.<sup>12</sup>

**Septicemia (or sepsis)** – a serious, life-threatening blood infection, which can progress rapidly from fever, chills and/or a rapid heart rate to septic shock or death<sup>13</sup>

**Sequela (sĕ-kwĕ'la) (plural: sequelae)** – a secondary condition that follows as a consequence of a disease<sup>14</sup>

**Serogroup ('sir-ō- grŭp)** – a group of bacteria or viruses that contain one or more common antigens (a substance that can cause an immune reaction<sup>15</sup>) and used to classify different subtypes of the organism<sup>16,17</sup>

**Vaccine** – a preparation of dead, weakened, or modified microorganisms (e.g., viruses, or bacteria) or a portion of the organisms structure used for inoculation to produce immunity to a disease by stimulating the production of an immune response<sup>18</sup>

**Virus (vi'rus)** – a microscopic, infectious agent that contains its own nucleic acid (DNA or RNA) but requires a host's cellular machinery to replicate<sup>19,20</sup>

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