

SUMMER 2021

MOMENTUM

LOCAL PEOPLE. TRUE STORIES. REAL ADVICE.

ORTHO Q&A

What you need
to know

FEELING AT HOME

Homecare, palliative care,
& hospice: understanding
the differences

SUGAR LOW

Tips for reducing
the sweet stuff from
your diet

A WAR ZONE LIKE NO OTHER

Behind the scenes: Rosa Blackdeer's
battle with the worst of the pandemic
during her NYC deployment



Black River
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Letter from our CEO



Mary Beth White-Jacobs
Chief Executive Officer, BRMH

WITH EVERY EXPERIENCE, WE KEEP GETTING BETTER

In my role as CEO, a big part of my responsibility is to make sure Black River Memorial Hospital is continually improving. Sometimes, the best way we do that is simply to learn from the experiences of others. That sure was the case with Rosa Blackdeer, our medical/surgical director, who spent two months caring for COVID patients in New York during the height of the pandemic.

Though we were fortunate to experience our surge later in the pandemic, Rosa helped us learn how to prepare before it occurred. Through the stories she shared, we also gained an understanding of how significant the mental and emotional toll would be on our care providers, leading us to introduce new support processes and reward and recognition programs. Because of Rosa's experience, I confidently can say we're a better hospital. You can read her powerful story on Page 5.

We're also better because of the extensive orthopedic services (Page 3) being provided by Dr. Mark McCarthy and other visiting physicians like him. It's important for folks to know they don't have to go to a huge health care facility to receive advanced orthopedic treatments, as well as services such as urology, ENT, and eye care provided at BRMH.

Our hospice service, meanwhile, celebrates its 20th anniversary next year, and having had my mother and father cared for by our hospice providers, I know what it means to keep people in their homes to be with families and get that extra support. Our homecare director, Dena Graff, and her staff are a dedicated team who help better the lives of many of our community members (Page 7).

Lastly, I'm excited to share that we'll be launching a progressive new website later this year featuring our new blog, B-More, dedicated to health and wellness (Page 13). It's just one more way our hospital continues to improve.

Excellence Always,

Mary Beth

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COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

JORDAN NORTMAN

feels the love

AS SON BATTLES EYE DISORDER

Jordan Nortman always has generously given his time to help the community. Little did he know when he returned to his hometown of Black River Falls in 2016 that it would be him and his family on the receiving end of community support—when they needed it most.

From the time he was young, Jordan has found joy in volunteering: helping host Thanksgiving dinners for the less fortunate at a local church, being involved with Project Christmas of Jackson County, and coaching a youth soccer team. As a real estate agent at Coldwell Banker River Valley Realtors, he recently began a stint on the Black River Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors, and he's planning a charity golf event to help an area school overcome a lunch-fund deficit.

"If there's a way I can help, whether it's an organization or an individual, I try to do what I can," Jordan says.

In November of last year, Jordan and his wife, Stephanie, had their second child, Grayson. After a couple of weeks, they sensed something was wrong with his eyesight. A diagnosis soon followed that shook the family: aniridia, an eye disorder characterized by a complete or partial absence of the colored part of

the eye, the iris, that occurs in just 1 of every 50,000-100,000 people. There is no cure.

As difficult as the news was, Jordan and Stephanie, also a Black River Falls native, and their 3½-year-old son Camden quickly realized they had a strong support system. "We've had a ton of people in the community reach out, people who have similar diagnoses," Jordan says. "We're happy to be living at home because we basically have the whole town supporting us."

Jordan likens aniridia to your pupils always being dilated, making his son sensitive to light. While Grayson's prognosis won't be fully known until he's able to verbalize what he is experiencing with his sight, Jordan says he likely will be legally blind. If that's not enough, Grayson has cataracts in both eyes and suffers from nystagmus, in which the eyes make repetitive, uncontrolled movements.

"It's been a lot to process," Jordan says.

It's been easier, though, as he's experienced the same feeling all those people he's helped over the years have.

"I've never really had to have any community support until the last few months," Jordan says, "and it's just nice to feel it."

3 TIPS FOR A SAFE SUMMER

Make your summer fun and safe with help from Dr. Carol Martin, MD, who specializes in emergency medicine at Black River Memorial Hospital.

1 COOL DOWN

When the symptoms of heat exhaustion—dizziness, headache, sore muscles—turn more serious, you could be suffering a heat stroke. Martin says to seek medical care when you have a fever of 103 or higher, have a fast pulse, or when a person is confused or has passed out. Someone experiencing these symptoms should be moved to a cooler location and have cool, damp cloths applied or do a cool bath.

2 APPLY SUNSCREEN OFTEN, GENEROUSLY

Everyone should consider wearing daily sunscreen, even if you don't burn easily because you're still likely getting sun damage, Martin says. "SPF30 is probably the average sunscreen for the majority of people" because it blocks 97% of UVB rays. She stresses that most people don't apply enough—1 oz. per application is recommended—to reapply every two hours and to allow it to dry before entering the water.

3 WHEN BUGS BITE

Swelling, redness, and itchiness at the spot of an insect bite are normal; however, if you're entire body is scratchy, your throat doesn't feel right, or you appear red and feel hot, "you want to head to the emergency room" because you may be having an allergic reaction, Martin says, adding that 3% to 7% of people have a severe insect allergy.



IT'S CLEAR: ORTHOPEDICS SERVICES ARE FIRST RATE

SURGEON **MARK McCARTHY** ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT BRMH'S OFFERINGS

How much does the average person know about orthopedics? "It's really hit or miss," says Mark McCarthy, an orthopedic surgeon at Black River Memorial Hospital. Some patients come to him with a self-diagnosis, while he's also heard orthopedics be confused for orthodontics.

To be clear, orthopedics is the branch of medicine that focuses on the care of the musculoskeletal system, which is made up of muscles, joints, ligaments, and tendons. However, that doesn't answer all the commonly asked questions about BRMH's vast orthopedic offerings. McCarthy is here to help.

“I think the bottom line is treating people with a lot of respect and concern for the issue they bring to us, and that's probably our strongest suit.”

MARK McCARTHY, MD

I've heard of arthroscopy, but what is it exactly?

Arthroscopy is a surgical procedure. It involves the visual examination of the interior of a joint with a piece of camera equipment called an arthroscope to diagnose or treat various conditions or injuries of a joint and especially to repair or remove damaged or diseased tissue or bone.

McCarthy says BRMH uses arthroscopy for a variety of procedures, from a torn meniscus and cartilage restoration in the knee to rotator cuff repair and ligament reconstruction in the shoulder. "Probably 95 percent of the arthroscopy I do is in the shoulder and knee."

The main advantage of

arthroscopy is that it's minimally invasive, resulting in much smaller incisions to heal. "The day and age we live in, this has become the standard," McCarthy says, "But it's still evolving."

How is arthroscopy different from joint replacement?

Joint replacement is a more extensive surgical procedure that entails removing part or all of the damaged joint and replacing it with metal or plastic artificial implants.

"With replacement surgery, you're (dealing with) a joint that's extremely worn out and a very disabled patient," McCarthy says, and undergoing the procedure can have a big impact in giving someone their quality of life back.

And while it involves a bigger incision and "I can't get away from it type of pain," McCarthy routinely hears from his

patients the day after surgery that "Yeah, they have some pain, but almost all of them will gladly trade the pain they had before for the pain of the surgery."

I'm experiencing joint pain. Should I see a doctor?

McCarthy advises asking yourself some questions about the extent of the pain, such as: Is it affecting your quality of sleep? Does walking a block involve pain? Or putting on shoes and socks, or getting in and out of a car?

"If those answers are affirmative, that's a patient who's pretty close to wanting something done" surgically, McCarthy says, but "there's never a wrong reason to come see me or an orthopedic surgeon and let us sort out why you're having pain and provide treatment options."

And outside of surgery, those can include physical therapy, over-the-counter medications, braces, and injections.



Arthroscopic procedures require smaller incisions that heal quicker.

What other services does BRMH offer?

McCarthy says the hospital provides several "niche" services including cartilage restoration, advanced shoulder procedures, biological treatments, and patella/kneecap instability procedures. "Those are the kind of things a lot of patients are looking for, and you don't have to go far" to receive them.

Additional specialties include sports medicine, occupational therapy, and ACL prevention.

"Our service is very professional, and our bedside manner is highly regarded," McCarthy says. "I think the bottom line is treating people with a lot of respect and concern for the issue they bring to us, and that's probably our strongest suit."

THE FIGHT OF A LIFETIME

BRMH'S ROSA BLACKDEER SHARES EXPERIENCE OF CARING FOR COVID PATIENTS IN NYC HOTSPOT

"Please just kill me," Maria told her nurse Rosa Blackdeer on a regular basis. "Just let me go."

For any healthcare provider, carefully listening to the needs of the patient is key to a healthy outcome. Not this time.

"Nope, that's not an option," Blackdeer, the medical/surgical director at Black River Memorial Hospital, recalls telling her elderly patient, who was battling COVID-19. "You'll pull through this. We have the medications you need. You're strong and we can do this."



"Please just kill me... Just let me go"

Maria told her nurse Rosa Blackdeer on a regular basis.

It was one of many experiences Blackdeer never will forget while providing care to COVID patients at Lincoln Medical Center in the Bronx, New York, in April and May last year as the area became one of the nation's first "hotspots."

She received the call at 10 a.m. on a Saturday to deploy as part of her service as an Air Force Reservist. She enjoyed a quick celebration with her husband and three children "because we didn't know if we were going to see each other again." By 8 a.m. the next day, Blackdeer was on her way to take part in a battle unlike any she'd seen.

"When I go into a war zone, I know what to expect," she said. "This one was unexpected. It was a disease where no one knew what was happening. It was a disease no one knew how to control. So (the anxiety) hits you all at once."

Soon, Blackdeer was living through the frightening moments the rest of us were watching on TV or reading about as COVID overwhelmed New York City. From personal protective equipment shortages to severely unfavorable patient-provider ratios to running out of supplies, "it was rough," she said.

"We don't have Depends®; we're making some. We run out of IV tubing; we put two secondaries together. It was a lot of putting our heads together to give the patient what they needed," Blackdeer said. "I was calling it MacGyvering nursing because that's how I felt sometimes."

The hardest part? "At some point, I was taking care of patients I knew were not going to survive, and decisions had to be made about who could be saved," she said. "I don't think that was explained too much to patients. However, we as nurses knew. That was hard."

But even in the darkest times, there were bright spots. Such as "family dinners" with her peers back at their hotel, sharing their wins and losses from the day. Bike rides through the city on days off.

Blackdeer learned a lot about limits too—and pushing past hers. "Even though I came home and sat in my shower in my hotel sometimes and just cried," she said she came to expect herself to persevere.

She formed a rare kind of bond with her fellow providers as they banded together to battle through what likely will be the biggest challenge they face as medical professionals.



And lives were saved — including Maria's. When Rosa asked her patient if she'd remembered their conversations, Maria replied, "Yes, and thank you for not listening."

"That will be an impact I forever will remember," Blackdeer said.



WHEN THE BEST CARE HAPPENS AT

HOME

**BRMH'S HOMECARE, PALLIATIVE,
AND HOSPICE SERVICES OFFER
CONVENIENCE, COMFORT**

Personal Care Program patient Clarice Salsbery finds great comfort knowing she can stay in her home with a little help from Chris Barnett, BRMH Homecare-Hospice home health aide.

Black River Memorial Hospital offers a variety of services that allow patients to receive quality care from the comfort of their homes rather than make frequent or lengthy visits to the hospital.



"I think this is probably some of the best support we can offer our community," says Dena Graff, BRMH Homecare-Hospice director. "We're a connection to the community in terms of what's really going on in homes, what families maybe are struggling with."

If you think this type of service might be right for yourself or a loved one, Graff provides an overview of BRMH's homecare, palliative care, and hospice services, which are offered within about a 40-miles radius of Black River Falls.

HOMECARE

Homecare is a limited-term service (about eight weeks) "usually for people who are recovering from a hospital stay or maybe have had a lot of repeated falls or balance issues, maybe a newly diagnosed diabetic," Graff says.

It's a "skilled service," meaning it requires having a nurse or a physical, occupational, or speech therapist involved.

Education is a key component; homecare patients and their family members learn about their disease, lifestyle changes, medication, and therapy exercises.

"We do a lot of teaching more than anything," Graff says. "We want to get you to be as independent as you can be so that you can remain in your home."

BRMH also offers Personal Care, in which an aide helps with such things as bathing and getting dressed, medication and exercise reminders, and providing meals. Supportive Care is aimed more at elderly people who are lonely and involves housekeeping, running errands, and socializing.

PALLIATIVE CARE

This long-term service might be a good fit for someone with a chronic disease who would prefer to receive treatment from home.

"Usually they've come to the decision that I don't want to go to the doctor every time I need something. I don't want to have all these tests," Graff said. "I'd rather just have the nurse come here and check me out every few weeks."

Palliative care takes more of a comfort approach than curative, Graff says, and addresses pain, loss of mobility, fatigue, shortness of breath, and symptoms that can impact a person's daily life. A nurse practitioner will visit the patient's home, whether that's a residence or a care facility, about once a month to review medications, help the patient understand their disease, discuss advanced-care planning, diet, and community resources, and set goals of care.

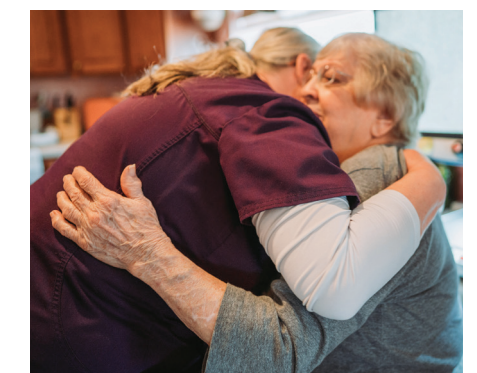
HOSPICE

This type of care is available to those whose life expectancy is six months or less. Its purpose is to manage pain and create a calm environment leading to what Graff calls a "good death."

"That means your loved one is comfortable, in their bed, with their loved ones around them, their pain under control, and they've said their goodbyes," she says.

The great part of the hospice service, according to Graff, is its breadth. In addition to medical care, it includes a pharmacy, chaplain, social workers, volunteers, aides, therapy animal visits, massage therapy, help with funeral arrangements, and grief support.

"What we really focus on and try to help families and patients understand is hospice is about quality — quality in your day," Graff says. "If you want to sleep in your recliner all night. If you want to skip a meal, go for a ride, fishing ... that's OK."



TAKE THE RIGHT STEPS TO BETTER FOOT CARE

Whether you're lacing up a pair of running shoes for your morning jog or slipping on sandals for a trip to the beach, proper foot care begins with having the right footwear. Bill Larkin, a physical therapist at Black River Memorial Hospital, provides a host of strategies to help ensure the health of your feet so you're ready to go as summer gets rolling.

TIME FOR NEW SHOES?

Larkin says to check for wear and tear, especially the soles, and pay special attention to the back of your shoes. The outside edge is usually going to wear out first, and when you see a big slant, or the tread or cushioning is compressed or worn away, it's time to head to the shoe store.

COMFORT IS KEY

When selecting any kind of footwear, comfort comes first, Larkin says, along with choosing something appropriate for the activity you're planning. Are your toes cramped or pressing against the front of the shoe? Are you forced to grip the shoe with your toes to keep it secure? If so, keep looking because, sure, you want fashionable shoes, but putting design first is an unwise move.

A good test, according to Larkin, is to remove the sole from the shoe and place your foot on it. There should be an approximate match in shape and size, and your toes shouldn't hang over the edge.

First and foremost, a shoe should feel comfortable when trying it on for the first time.



your heel, big toe, and pinkie "where things tend to rub," Larkin says, and make sure no debris is entering an open-style shoe and causing injury.

BLISTER CARE

If, after extended wear, you begin to develop a blister, try to keep it intact, Larkin says, "because that reduces your risk of infection." If it does rupture,

your calf muscles and rolling the arch of your foot over a tennis ball are all options.

A DOCTOR'S CARE

Even if you're doing everything right, it's no guarantee against soreness or an injury to your foot. Larkin says if you're experiencing pain despite stretching, icing, and taking a couple of days off from activity, and especially if the pain



“Pay close attention to the outside part of your heel, big toe, and pinkie “where things tend to rub.”

BILL LARKIN, PT

TRY 'EM OUT

Now that you believe you've found the right shoes, take them on a test drive. Most stores allow you to bring footwear home to try it out inside, and Larkin advises doing so for a couple of hours while engaging in the activity you intend to use them for regularly.

He says to check your feet for soreness or red spots—especially those with poor foot circulation or diabetes—after wearing new shoes the first few times. Pay close attention to the outside part of

keep it covered with a Band-Aid. He adds that blisters can be the result of moisture in your socks, so wear socks that excel at wicking moisture and bring an extra pair when you'll be engaging in strenuous activity.

STRETCHING IT

Support your selection of the right footwear with warming up "to prepare your muscles and tendons" when planning to do something fairly athletic, Larkin says, and stretching afterward is also important. Toe and heel raises beforehand, and afterward, stretching

is keeping you awake at night, it may be time to schedule an appointment with BRMH's Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation department. Check with your insurance to see if a referral is required.

"It's always easier to probably see somebody on the front end," Larkin says. "We always try to give things time to get better, which is good, but barring any significant injury, I'd say if it's not improving within three to five days, it's not a bad idea to seek some advice from a healthcare professional."



THE AVERAGE AMERICAN CONSUMES **71** GRAMS OF SUGAR EVERY DAY
THAT'S **57 LBS** A YEAR!

The American Heart Association sugar recommendations are 25g per day for women, 38g for men, and 12-25g for children.

MORE PROTEINS, FATS

A diet that is short on protein can cause your blood sugar level to jump easily because when sugar is eaten on its own, it goes straight into your bloodstream. Pairing a protein with a sugar or carb allows your body to break both down together, keeping the release of sugar more steady. “Including protein in every meal is important,” Barth says.



Eating more fats makes you feel fuller longer, reducing your craving for sugars and also helping to stabilize your blood sugar level.

OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MOUTH

“If you want to eat less sugar, simply remove the temptation,” Barth says. Ridding your home of sugary snacks and beverages creates the element of work when you’re craving sugar, forcing you to go out and buy something to satisfy it. Another option: choose healthier but still sweet options such as lower-sugar snacks, frozen fruit, smoothies, or yogurt.

Understanding nutrition labels can have great benefits when it comes to sugar intake.

READ LABELS

“Learning to read the labels can help you understand how much sugar you’re actually consuming,” Barth says, “because when you eat something, do you think about how much sugar you’re eating, or are you just, like, ‘this tastes good?’ ”

She says to look out for syrups and ingredients ending in “ose” in addition to sugar content.



SWEET TIPS FOR REDUCING SUGAR IN YOUR DIET

As the clinical dietitian at Black River Memorial Hospital, Wendy Barth sticks to a strict, nutritious diet, right? Well, not exactly. “I just love all the sweets,” she says, with ice cream being her favorite. But she has several methods for reducing the amount of sugar in her diet while still satisfying her sweet tooth, and she shares them here:

MORE WHOLE FOODS

Whole foods are those that have not been processed, refined, or had ingredients added to them, such as fruits and vegetables. Eating more of them, Barth says, reduces the amount of processed foods you eat, and the unnatural—and unhealthy—sugar that goes with them.

Whole foods generally are more filling, so eating an apple provides a natural, healthier source of sugar and helps you feel full—reducing your urge to reach for that slice of apple pie.

BEWARE OF BEVERAGES

Beverages are a huge source of added sugars, Barth says, “and this is one of the things most people are unaware of.” She advises:

- asking for unsweetened beverages when eating out;
- paying close attention to labels (your favorite coffee drink or juice is probably loaded with sugar);
- opting for Stevia when using an artificial sweetener because it comes from a plant;
- drinking diet soda, in moderation, rather than regular soda; while it uses artificial sugar, there is much less of it in the diet variety because it is 300 to 1,000 times sweeter than the natural cane sugar used in regular soda;
- adding infused fruits or vegetables to water to “help give it a little flavor but still give you something that you desire” instead of a high-sugar beverage.

EDUCATION EXPANSION

NEW BLOG, WEBSITE WILL PROVIDE VITAL INFORMATION FOR IMPROVING HEALTH OF COMMUNITY

As Black River Memorial Hospital battled COVID-19, something important came into focus for providers and staff:

“Through our partnership with Jackson County Public Health, we realized our community really looked to us to be a leader in terms of education and information about healthcare-related topics,” said Miranda Greenwold, BRMH director of marketing and community relations.

As a result, the hospital is preparing to launch a new blog and website to give area residents easy access to valuable tools and resources to help improve their health and well-being.

“We saw there was a lot of potential to be a better partner in providing education for the community and to connect our patients and community members with local health information brought to them by local health leaders and providers,” Greenwold said.

The B-More blog will provide a wide variety of content, including:

- Tips on promoting your health and well-being
- How to take care of minor illnesses and injuries at home
- Nutrition and healthy eating (including seasonal recipes)
- Community events that promote healthy lifestyles

“BRMH providers will participate heavily to provide as much localized content as possible. Readers can expect four to five new posts per month, and posts will be repurposed and launched across the hospital’s digital platforms, Greenwold said.

The blog will live on BRMH’s new website, expected to launch this fall, and include refreshed content, an engaging user interface, and visual identities for the three brand segments: Black River Memorial Hospital, B-Home Services and Supplies, and the Black River Healthcare Clinic.

“We’re trying to increase our digital presence to make it easier for patients to find information,” Greenwold said, “providing the right information to the right people at the right time so they can make the best possible decisions for their health.”

She emphasized that BRMH’s success as an educational resource will depend heavily on participation, so she encourages individuals to interact with and share content, and to provide feedback to the hospital regarding the blog as well as the new website when it launches.

“We are hoping that by providing people with better information based on the local resources available to them, it will help our community members make better-informed decisions when it comes to their overall physical, mental, and emotional health,” she said.

When it launches, the blog can be found on BRMH’s website or by visiting brmh.net/bmore.



Nutrition FOR YOUR BODY AND MIND

CUCUMBER WATERMELON FETA SALAD



PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES
SERVINGS: 4
CALORIES: 168 KCAL PER SERVING

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cups sliced cucumber (seeds removed)
- 3 cups watermelon (cubed or balled)
- 2 tablespoons mint (thinly sliced or small mint leaves)
- 1/3 cups feta cheese (crumbled)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add the cucumber, watermelon, and mint to a large bowl.
2. In a smaller bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lime juice, and salt and pepper.
3. Drizzle the dressing over the melon mixture and toss to coat.
4. Sprinkle with feta cheese and serve.

NUTRITION FACTS Per serving:

Calories..... 168 KCALS
Total Fat..... 3g
Protein..... 2g

Recipe provided by BRMH Registered Dietitian, Wendy Barth



SUMMER WORDSEARCH

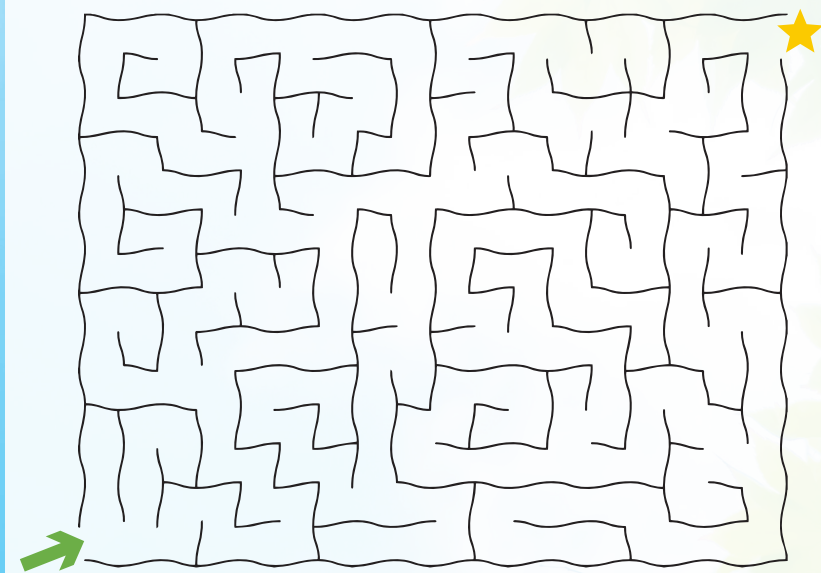
Find all of the Summer related words in the list below. Words can be found in all directions, vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

O	N	O	I	T	A	C	A	V	W	S	D
U	G	D	F	B	Z	A	Y	Q	Q	W	D
B	L	E	M	O	N	A	D	E	V	I	V
O	X	Y	C	J	F	R	A	J	Y	M	L
J	N	E	E	R	C	S	N	U	S	M	O
A	T	A	E	H	F	U	S	X	T	I	O
E	T	K	E	P	S	S	F	C	H	N	P
U	U	W	J	K	B	S	R	A	F	G	R
F	E	U	Q	E	B	R	A	B	H	C	Q
Q	K	F	C	J	I	G	M	K	G	M	O
C	C	C	H	C	A	E	B	P	E	D	R
T	K	S	E	D	I	S	T	U	O	N	S

Barbeque
Beach
Heat
Lemonade
Outside
Pool
Sunscreen
Swimming
Vacation

SUMMER DAYS MAZE

Begin your way through the maze at the green start arrow. Try not to hit too many dead ends, and see if you can make it to the star!



Answers on the website: brmh.net/momentum



Visit our website at **brmh.net** for a full list of hospital events and to view our latest videos.

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For full disclosure, visit www.brmh.net/nondiscrimination/english.

ONE-OF-A-KIND ANNUAL REPORT **COMING SOON**

Like 2020 itself, our upcoming annual report will be like no other. In the pandemic, Black River Memorial Hospital faced one of its greatest challenges. You'll be able to read about how we came together and persevered, maintaining our commitment to providing care for our community that is excellent—always. You can read the report on our website at **brmh.net** in mid-July, or hard copies are available by calling **715-284-5361**.

