

Momentum

Local people. True stories. Real advice.

BLACK RIVER
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

October 2014



**Leave Knee
Pain Behind**



Innovations in Knee Hardware

You've all probably heard the saying
"measure twice, cut once."

As a professional carpenter and hobbyist wood worker, James Huber truly understands that once you cut something—whether it's wood, paper or something more complex—it's hard to put it back together and have it function in the same way. So when he needed a knee replacement in the spring of 2014, he was glad Black River Memorial Hospital had an option that made fewer cuts.

Measuring pain

James had suffered with knee pain on and off for about 10 years. The pain affected him at work, and this year, it became almost unbearable.

"I eventually was in so much pain that I couldn't sleep at night, which made getting through a work day in constant pain even more difficult," James says.

So when he finally decided to do something about the pain, James turned to Todd Duellman, MD, an orthopaedic surgeon at Black River Memorial Hospital (BRMH).

"I chose Dr. Duellman because I've lived in Black River Falls for most of my life, and ever since he started at BRMH, he has maintained a great reputation in the community," James says. "And several people I know personally recommended him to me."

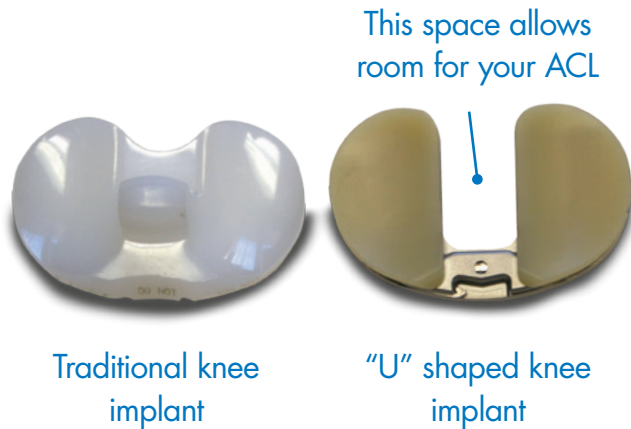
After meeting with Dr. Duellman, James learned that his right knee was bone on bone, and that he'd need a knee replacement. However, because James was only 60 years old and very active, Dr. Duellman believed he was the perfect candidate for a new option—a ligament-saving total knee replacement.

The more natural knee replacement

While a knee replacement can hardly be called "all natural," Dr. Duellman's ligament-saving option offers patients more long-term natural knee function.

"I'd give Dr. Duellman and BRMH a 110 percent based on my experience," James says. "I'm so glad they offer this new option for knee replacements, and I've already recommended it to my friends with knee pain."

How? By preserving the ACL (anterior cruciate ligament), which prevents the tibia (shin bone) from slipping in front of the femur (thigh bone) and provides stability to the knee when it rotates side to side. Traditional knee replacements require that the ACL be cut in order to place the implant, which is a cap that completely covers the top of the tibia. In the ligament-saving procedure, the knee joint implant is “U” shaped, allowing it to be placed around the ACL connection at the tibia.



Benefits of saving the ACL include:

- Normal knee stability
- Natural knee mobility and flexibility
- Range of motion improves more quickly after surgery

Recovery blueprint

James’ surgery only required a one-night stay at BRMH, and he started physical therapy at the hospital the following day.

He had 11 sessions over three weeks, during which the physical therapy team worked with James to regain strength and range of motion as well as his ability to walk. James only needed to use a walker through the first week of his therapy, and then he transitioned to using a cane occasionally for the last two weeks.

Once James had completed all his therapy sessions, he was walking independently, climbing up and down stairs and even driving. And now, he continues to do exercises at home to keep his progress moving forward.

“I’m no longer in constant pain, and I can easily sleep through the night,” James says. “I’m even able to mow the lawn with my push mower and do yard work.” ■

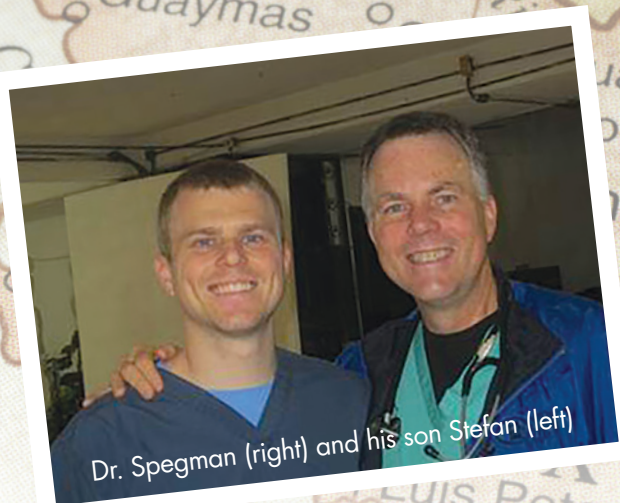


KEEPING IT REAL

Dr. Duellman is one of the only physicians in Wisconsin to be trained in performing this ligament-saving procedure. He is also an expert in minimally invasive knee replacements, which use smaller incisions and result in less damage to the surrounding knee tissue. This ultimately leads to shorter hospital stays, a shorter recovery and less scarring.

Learn more about your knee replacement options at brmh.net





Dr. Spegman (right) and his son Stefan (left)

Inspired to Serve

The physicians, nurses and pharmacists at Black River Memorial Hospital (BRMH) and the Krohn Clinic have a long-standing tradition of participating in mission trips that help underserved communities around the world.

Dr. Howard F. Spegman, family physician at the Krohn Clinic, and his son Stefan, emergency department nurse at BRMH, are happy to continue this tradition. And they have, most recently with a mission trip to Mexico City this past June.

The trip was through Operation Serve, an organization whose mission is to offer opportunities for people to help underserved and unreachable communities. As part of Operation Serve, Dr. Spegman and Stefan, along with other local providers and international volunteers, were able to provide medical, dental and optical care through some of Mexico City's poorest churches.

During the trip, Stefan was able to pull from his nursing background to triage patients into the most appropriate line of care. He performed vital sign and blood glucose testing as well as listened to patients as they explained their symptoms and medical histories.

"I was a Spanish major before I got my nursing degree, so fortunately, I was able to have conversations with patients to understand their health needs and get to know them as a person," Stefan says. "Making that connection with a patient is one of the reasons I love being a nurse, so I'm glad I was able to experience that during the mission trip."

For Dr. Spegman, he helped treat the patients who needed medical care—which was around 30-50 people each day. The most common conditions he saw were hypertension, diabetes, muscle/joint inflammation or pain and parasites. Dr. Spegman was able to provide medicines for hypertension and parasites, vitamins and educational information and tips on managing health conditions.

"This was my sixth trip to Mexico City through Operation Serve, and each time I go, I'm reminded that the relationships we build and the services we provide are not only valuable to our patients, but also to us as providers," Dr. Spegman says.

While this was Stefan's first mission trip as a medical provider, he has accompanied his dad on trips in the past. When Stefan was about seven years old, Dr. Spegman took his entire family to Kenya for a year while he worked at a missionary hospital. And a few years after that, Dr. Spegman brought Stefan on one of his trips to Mexico City.

"The first time Stefan came with me, he was too young to provide care, but he played soccer with the local children and helped keep them entertained, happy and calm," Dr. Spegman says. "So being able to return with my son and see him treating and caring for patients was truly rewarding." ■



BRMH's new MRI (left) and CT (right)

Increased Comfort. Improved Care.

When you hear that you need a CT scan or MRI, your first reaction may be fear, anxiety or uneasiness.

But the claustrophobic, noisy exams most patients picture in their heads are not what patients who receive CT and MRI scans at Black River Memorial Hospital (BRMH) experience. Especially now that it has recently upgraded its MRI and CT equipment, with quality rivaling that provided in major hospitals around the nation.

Most advanced MRI

"One of the main reasons we decided to invest in this new MRI was for patient comfort," says Mary Jo Ewing, diagnostic imaging manager at BRMH.

This is why BRMH selected the Toshiba Titan MRI; it has an ultra-short bore and the industry's widest opening. This means BRMH not only can accommodate patients of all sizes, but also reduce patients' fears of feeling claustrophobic.

To further increase comfort levels, the new MRI has soft, inviting lighting and includes patented technology to reduce acoustic noise by 90 percent, creating the quietest scanning

environment possible. It also features Cinemavision goggles, which allow patients to watch a movie or listen to music. The Cinemavision light and sound experience has been proven to eliminate claustrophobia, relax the patient and reduce the need for sedation.

Supercharged CT

BRMH's new Toshiba Aquilion Prime CT scanner will allow BRMH to continue to provide the safest, most efficient and most accurate diagnostic imaging for all of its patients, whether they are emergency, trauma or surgical.

With a larger table, the scanner makes exams more comfortable for everyone. The scanner's advanced dose technology also enables BRMH to reduce radiation exposure without sacrificing image quality.

"We can reduce radiation exposure by 40 – 60 percent for both our patients and our imaging staff," Mary Jo says. "And because the new CT scanner takes 80 pictures at once, we can usually decrease a patient's scan time as well as get the most detailed image possible." ■



Share Your Opinion for the Chance to Win a \$200 Visa Gift Card

Black River Memorial Hospital created *Momentum* Magazine with the goal of it becoming a local healthcare resource for our patients and community. And since our first issue, four years ago, it's told inspiring patient stories, explained new services and communicated changes in our facility as well as in the overall healthcare industry.

To ensure *Momentum* continues to be a valuable tool for our community, we are conducting a brief readership study to gain insights into what our readers enjoy and ways to improve.

Three Easy Ways to Participate:

1. Go ONLINE to www.brmh.net.
2. Call 866-278-8191.
3. Scan the QR code to the right with your smartphone.



Complete the survey by November 15 to be eligible for the drawing.

Tammy Vehrenkamp, RN, BSN

Medical/Surgical Nurse Manager

Role models come from many different places. They can be parents, teachers, neighbors, famous philanthropists or a favorite author. For Tammy Vehrenkamp, her role model has been, and always will be, her older sister. Because she not only motivated Tammy to be a kind and compassionate person, she also inspired Tammy to follow in her footsteps and become a nurse.

"Through my sister's experiences, I saw the gratification a person can get from helping others," Tammy says. "And when I became a nurse, I felt for myself how wonderful it is to help a person heal and feel better when they are sick or injured."

So 21 years ago, Tammy brought her nursing career to Black River Memorial Hospital (BRMH). Throughout those years, she's worked in medical/surgical, OB and as an infection prevention nurse and patient care coordinator. But for the last 12 years, Tammy has been the Medical/Surgical Nurse Manager.

As her nursing roles evolved, so did her involvement in direct patient care. In her current manager position, Tammy has become responsible for many of the "behind-the-care" tasks like staff scheduling, hiring, training, safety and quality.

"I became a nurse because I love helping people, and while I have less direct patient interaction as a manager, I see the position as a great opportunity to affect the care that BRMH patients receive," she says.

Tammy's everyday duties help the medical/surgical department continue to meet and exceed the standards for delivering safe and quality healthcare, and her additional involvement in the following groups enable her to be part of ensuring the entire hospital is reaching the highest standards of care, and ultimately, patient satisfaction:

- **The Strategic Planning Committee**—Tammy represents the inpatient perspective.
- **The Medication Management Team**, where she helps oversee medication safety and quality processes.
- **The Clinical Excellence Team**, which allows Tammy to play a part in overall hospital process improvement.
- **The selection committee** for BRMH's new electronic health record coming in April of 2015.

"I've always been impressed with how innovative and forward-thinking BRMH is and how supportive everyone, from the leadership down, is toward each other," Tammy says. "I truly believe our high employee satisfaction goes hand-in-hand with our dedication to high patient satisfaction."

Another, more personal, way Tammy helps care for the people of the Black River Falls area is through an annual fundraiser she organizes in memory of her mom who passed away from lung cancer seven years ago. The event features an auction, raffles, a walk, and last year, a kickball tournament.

"Some of the proceeds go to organizations in Eau Claire and La Crosse that provide financial assistance for funerals or for those who need rides to medical appointments," Tammy says. "The rest of the money is distributed to local families who are nominated by friends and family because they need help with a specific medical or financial situation."

Tammy and her family are also very involved with their church and have taken mission trips together. In her own free time, Tammy plays softball in the summer and bowls in the winter. ■



Tammy says one of the best parts of her job is her coworkers; she considers them her second family.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Black River Falls has always been a part of **Charlotte Thompson's** life, and it's given her many things. It's provided her a wonderful place to grow up and raise her own family. It's helped her discover her love for nursing. And it was the location of her first and last nursing job.

In return, Charlotte has been dedicated to giving back to the Black River Falls community.

One way she's done this is through her career as a registered nurse (RN) at Black River Memorial Hospital (BRMH). Charlotte actually got her start in nursing when she was only about 15 years old and began work as a nurse's aid. Then, after finishing her RN training in Rochester, Minnesota, she came back to work at BRMH in the operating room, medical/surgical floor, emergency room and as a supervisor.

"I was so grateful at the opportunity to be a nurse in my hometown—caring for my friends and family," Charlotte says. "And while the hospital grew and provided me with growth within my career, I also got to watch the entire community develop into what it is today."

Outside of nursing, another way Charlotte has been able to give back to the Black River Falls community is through her passion for gardening. She has been a member of the local garden club for almost 10 years, where she helps plan and maintain garden beds in town.

"The group is made up of local men and women who are interested in gardening and in making our town a little more beautiful," Charlotte says.

A third way that Charlotte stays involved is through the local Black River Falls food pantry. The pantry collects donations and then distributes them every Monday afternoon. Charlotte and other volunteers help those who need food go through the distribution line and select items from different categories, including perishable and frozen foods.

In addition to these activities, Charlotte is a water aerobics leader through the Arthritis Foundation, she makes phone "visits" for Interfaith Caregivers, and she waters plants once a week at the cemetery in the summer.

"We are suppose to take care of one another," Charlotte says, "It gives me great satisfaction to do my part to care for the community and its residents; plus, it keeps me active and healthy!" ■



Charlotte also loves gardening in her own yard. Spring through fall, she spends about one to two hours every day tending to her flowers, tomatoes and cucumbers.



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

HOSPITAL EVENTS 2014

Saturday, Nov. 1, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Diabetes Fair

Comfort Inn & Suites, Black River Falls

Nov. 4 – Dec. 4, 9 – 10 a.m.

*No class on Nov. 11 or Nov. 27

Senior Stay Fit Exercise Class

Jackson County Bank – Community Room

Register by calling: 715-284-1330

Tuesday, Nov. 11, 6:30 – 8 p.m.

Breastfeeding Class

BRMH - Dorothy Halvorson Room

Wednesday, Nov. 12, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Diabetes Education & Support

Group (DESG) Monthly Meeting

BRMH - Dorothy Halvorson Room

Wednesday, Nov. 12, 12 p.m.

American Red Cross Blood Drive,

sponsored by Partners

Armory, Black River Falls

Nov. 15

Marketplace Insurance -

2015 Open Enrollment Starts

For more information, visit healthcare.gov

Thursday, Nov. 20, 9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Partners Holiday Tea

Black River Memorial Hospital

Monday, Dec. 1, 7 p.m.

Hospice Evergreen Memorial Service

BRMH – Dorothy Halvorson Room

Sunday, Dec. 7, 5:30 p.m.

Love Lights Tree Lighting Ceremony

Black River Memorial Hospital

Monday, Dec. 8, 12 – 1 p.m.

Better Breather's Club Meeting

BRMH - Dorothy Halvorson Room

Dec. 12-13, 6:30 – 9 p.m. & 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Two-day Childbirth Education Class

BRMH – Dorothy Halvorson Room

Friday, Dec. 19, 10:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

American Red Cross Blood Drive,

sponsored by Partners

BRMH - Dorothy Halvorson Room

Dec. 31

Marketplace Insurance – Coverage ends for 2014 Marketplace Plans

For more information, visit healthcare.gov

Jan. 1

Marketplace Insurance – 2015

Coverage Can Begin

For more information, visit healthcare.gov

Tuesday, Jan. 13, 6:30 – 8 p.m.

Breastfeeding Class

BRMH - Dorothy Halvorson Room

Wednesday, Jan. 14, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Diabetes Education & Support

Group (DESG) Monthly Meeting

BRMH - Dorothy Halvorson Room

Feb. 15

Marketplace Insurance - 2015

Enrollment Ends

For more information, visit healthcare.gov