

Momentum

Local people. True stories. Real advice.

APRIL 2011



A Happy Camper

Tori is finally free from
over-the-top periods.

BLACK RIVER
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Getting through a rough period.

EASY TREATMENT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE FOR GOOD.

Your “friend” is visiting. It’s that “time of the month.” She’s “having her day.” Surely nothing else is cloaked with more alternative words than menstruation.

Didn’t we get over that, like decades ago? Is the natural cycle of womanhood anything anyone should be embarrassed or ashamed about?

Absolutely not. But for women who suffer the pain and embarrassment of heavy, oh-no-not-again bleeding, there is a quick, simple and safe solution.

Tori Bragee knows. Although her periods were light earlier in life, they gradually became a physical, emotional and social burden. Her heavy and erratic menstrual cycles were defined by pain and anemia-like symptoms – including a lack of energy and becoming easily tired. Her periods were affecting her personal and social life.

“I remember having my period when we were camping,” she says. “We were playing softball with the kids and all of the sudden I had to run into the camper because I was bleeding so heavily. It was ruining everything.”

With more energy and free from the pain, Tori Bragee enjoys favorite activities like camping and is closer than ever to her husband Ken.



In her late 40s Tori decided enough was enough. While she thought a hysterectomy was probably her only option, she was pleasantly surprised to learn about a minimally invasive alternative: endometrial ablation.

BIG WORD. SIMPLE PROCEDURE.

Kirk Lane, M.D., a family physician at the Krohn Clinic with specialized training in endometrial ablation, explains the one-time, minutes-only procedure. "The uterus has a layer of muscle and an endometrial layer," he says. "The endometrium is the layer the body sheds with each monthly period and then regrows in response to hormones. Endometrial ablation impedes this layer from growing and shedding each month."

He adds that, for 20 to 25 percent of women, heavy bleeding causes health, social or work-related problems. Many women who have heavy bleeding also have irregular periods, which can interfere with sexual intimacy. Some women may also become iron deficient or anemic. "After treatment most women have little or no menstrual bleeding," he notes.

The ideal candidate for the procedure is 35 or better and suffers from heavy bleeding. While not a form of birth control, endometrial ablation is recommended only for women who no longer plan to have children, and are not at high risk for endometrial cancer.

Unlike a hysterectomy, endometrial ablation does not require a hospital stay. The procedure typically takes only 45 minutes and there are no incisions. In most cases, women return to normal activities in three days – a dramatic contrast to the six to eight weeks of recovery following a hysterectomy.

While ablation has become relatively common within the past ten years, many women are unfamiliar with the procedure.

"Women often ask if they will still have a uterus after the procedure," says Dr. Lane. "They also wonder if their ovaries will still produce hormones. The answer to both of those questions is yes."

Tori says she had the same questions and concerns. "Dr. Lane was very detailed and thoughtful in explaining everything to me. That put me at ease right away.

Continued on next page...

IS IT AN OPTION FOR YOU?

Although each woman is unique, endometrial ablation might be right for you if:

- You're experiencing heavy bleeding and it hasn't responded to other treatments
- You have completed childbearing
- You prefer not to have a hysterectomy
- You're premenopausal

Millions of women nationwide have already turned their quality of life around with this insurance-covered procedure – and 9 out of 10 women who have the procedure are satisfied with the result.



To schedule an appointment with Dr. Lane, please call (715) 284-4311.

Kirk Lane, MD, treated Tori and will lead a free educational program about endometrial ablation on May 19 (see below for details).

ATTEND OUR FREE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.

LEARN MORE ABOUT ENDOMETRIAL ABLATION

Thursday, May 19

Sign-in and refreshments: 6:30 p.m.

Program starts: 7:00 p.m.

In the Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room
Black River Memorial Hospital

**Register by calling
715-284-5361**

Learn more at brmh.net

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"When I went in for the procedure, everyone at Black River Memorial was wonderful. I think it's remarkable that a hospital right in our backyard can perform a procedure like this. I can't say enough positives about Dr. Lane and the care I received."

At 51, Tori is enjoying life to the fullest. She no longer worries about "that time of the month." She is able to do the little things in life that many women take for granted—from going to work to going out for dinner—all without running to the bathroom in fear or embarrassment.

She can play softball again, even though her children, now ages 22, 20 and 18, might not be up for it.

Her advice to other women is clear. "If this is an option for you, do it. It will improve your life a million fold. The only side effects I've had are good ones. No more periods. No more pain. It's been life-changing for me."

Heavy menstrual bleeding should always be discussed with a physician to make sure there is not a more serious underlying condition. Although they may not be candidates for ablation, women who are post-menopausal should always see a physician if they experience vaginal bleeding or spotting regardless of how light or heavy the flow. These symptoms can be a sign of endometrial cancer. ■

ON THE GOOD OF DIABETES

Heidi Bird noticed something different as she drove her kids home from the movies last summer. Her vision was becoming blurred. She couldn't read the road signs. Anxious, she called her optometrist.


"He asked me if I had ever had a diabetic check up," Heidi recalls. "My mom had diabetes. My dad didn't. It was something I hadn't really thought about."

Following the recommendation of her optometrist, Heidi scheduled a check-up at the Ho Chunk Health Care Center. By that time, her vision had changed again. In fact, it had improved so dramatically that she didn't need her prescription glasses. She soon learned the reason behind the changes in her vision: high blood sugar.

"It was very scary," Heidi recalls. "I always thought of diabetes as a disease that strikes older people. Here I was at 37 being told that I was diabetic. It was a rude awakening."

The health center contacted Dr. Coville, Heidi's family physician at the Krohn Clinic, concerning Heidi's test results. After evaluating Heidi's condition and discussing treatment options with her, Dr. Coville prescribed medication to help lower Heidi's blood glucose. Treatment also included healthy meal planning, weight loss and exercise.

UNIQUE, REALLY-CLOSE-TO-HOME BIRTHING OPTIONS



The welcome variety of birthing options at Black River Memorial Hospital's Family Beginnings Birthplace is focused on making the birthing experience more comfortable, personal and tranquil – for about 300 moms and babies every year.

WATER WORKS. Hydrotherapy and water birth offer soothing benefits during labor and delivery. Water relaxes all the muscles of the body to allow the baby to descend and prepare for delivery.

ONE-ON-WONDERFUL. "Doula" is a Greek word used to describe a woman trained to support an expecting mother – emotionally, physically and

SIDE

Judy Heubel, nurse educator with Ho Chunk Health Care Center (left), leads the “Basics” diabetes education program at the center. Here, she shows patient Heidi Bird about testing blood sugar levels.



Since then, Heidi’s life has changed dramatically—but not as she initially expected.

She says managing her diabetes has changed her life “but it hasn’t held me back,” explains Heidi. “It’s turned me around to the person I used to be. I used to love running. I enjoyed being physically active. I got away from doing all of that because I was busy being a mom. Since my diagnosis, I’ve started running again. I’m doing something for myself that’s making me feel better and becoming healthier again.”

According to Judy Heubel, a nurse educator at the Ho Chunk Health Care Center, many people are afraid to tell their doctor about diabetic symptoms. She says denial can lead to long-term complications.

“It’s important to get an early diagnosis and treat your diabetes as soon as possible,” says Judy. “A lot of people ignore their symptoms. They’re afraid that they’ll have to give up everything they enjoy if they find out they have diabetes. That’s not the case.”

Today, Heidi continues to manage her diabetes with exercise, a healthy diet and medication. While she and

her family haven’t given up processed foods completely, she says they have cut back on fast food and enjoy home-cooked meals on a regular basis.

“I know diabetes is a growing issue, especially among native tribes,” says Heidi. “If you’re a woman or Native American, you need to take this health risk seriously. We’re all busy people but we can’t continue to endanger ourselves. We need to make healthier choices.”

DIABETES, WOMEN, AND NATIVE AMERICANS

- 12.6 million, or 10.8% of all women aged 20 years or older have diabetes.¹
- Approximately one third of American Indians age 45 and over have diabetes.²
- As a group, Native American women have the second-highest rate of being overweight, placing them at high risk for diabetes.³ ■

1) National Diabetes Fact Sheet, 2011 2) Making the Grade on Women’s Health: A National and State-by-State Report Card: National Women’s Law Center; August 2000. 3) Ross H. Lifting the Unequal Burden of Cancer on Minorities and the Underserved: NCI Develops Strategic Plan to Reduce Cancer Related Health Disparities. Washington, DC: Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; August 2000.

“informationally” – through labor, delivery and newborn care. Similarly, expecting moms can have a personal nurse at their side, providing one-on-one care from labor through delivery, and as a member of the baby’s nursing team following birth.

TUNE OUT PAIN. Music therapy-assisted childbirth is a pain management option focused on meeting the needs of mom, baby and the family during pregnancy and birth.

SAY SPAHHHHH. Aromatherapy, herbal therapy and massage therapy are now available at Black River

Memorial Hospital. With aroma and herbal therapy, oil extracts from organically grown plants are used to create a custom blend just for you. Through the sense of smell, the oils help relax and support you during the birthing experience. Through the sense of touch, massage therapy reduces stress during labor to help moms stay relaxed.

EXPLORE AND DISCUSS. Really close to home, Black River Memorial Hospital’s Family Beginnings Birthplace offers all of these options – in addition to more traditional methods of delivery. Discuss the best options for welcoming your new miracle with your doctor. ■

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Kathy Johnson

RN

Surgical Services



How long has Kathy Johnson, RN, been in the health care profession? "About a hundred years," she jokes. As a registered nurse since "19-something," Kathy says there's nothing else she'd rather be doing.

Today, Kathy works in Surgical Services at Black River Memorial Hospital. Although she worked at larger hospitals earlier in her career, she continues to be impressed by the expertise, extensive services and high level of care at Black River Memorial Hospital. She's also proud to be part of a group of health care professionals who truly work as a team.

"From the doctors and managers to the nurses and assistants, we all work as a team," she says. "Everyone is very supportive here. That's something that was hard to find at the larger hospitals I worked at. I'm glad we made the move to this area 20 years ago. ■"

ASK A DOCTOR



Dear Dr. Coville:

I just turned 50. Besides my regular mammogram, what kinds of preventative health tests should I get? Despite sneaking a chocolate chip cookie from time to time, I think I'm in pretty good shape.

A Dr. Coville says:

I'm glad you mentioned mammograms, especially if you're over age 40. In that case, mammograms are recommended every 1-2 years. If you're under that age, be sure to discuss a clinical breast exam with your doctor.

A baseline for cardiovascular health and cholesterol should be performed at age 35, then every year after age 50.

Pap smears are recommended every one to three years from age 21 to 65.

At age 50 and beyond, a colonoscopy should be performed every ten years.

Other preventive screenings are also based on your age and risk factors. For example, women who are sexually active are encouraged to get screening tests for HIV, Chlamydia and/or other STDs.

As women get older, they have an increased chance of getting osteoporosis. That's why a bone density test is often recommended for postmenopausal women under the age of 65 who have risk factors for osteoporosis and for all women 65 and older.

Emotional issues can also take their toll not only on our mental health, but also on our physical health. If you feel sad or hopeless, or have lost interest in doing things for an extended period of time, your doctor may recommend that you be screened for depression.

Of course, your family's medical history is important. Check sooner where appropriate.

Do you have a question? Please submit it to: yaegera@brmh.net ■



Lea Coville, M.D., is a family practice physician with Krohn Clinic, specializing in women's health.



FRIENDS SHARING FOOD.

Have you ever gone to bed hungry? Ever wake up the next morning with the same hunger pains but had no food to eat? It may be difficult to imagine, but this feeling is all too familiar for many families in Jackson County. And it's changing, thanks to the efforts of **Friends Sharing Food**.

Carol Anderson helps alleviate hunger in Jackson County through her involvement as chair of board of directors for the three programs that fall under the Friends Sharing Food umbrella: Food for Kids, Friends Food Shelf, and the Jackson County Food Pantry.

FOOD FOR KIDS distributes food bags to local elementary schools to make sure children who are at high risk for hunger will have food to eat on weekends.

The **FRIENDS FOOD SHELF** program distributes food to families once a week. "It's a self-selection program," explains Carol. "That means anyone in need can

Top (left to right): Mary Hansen, Food for Kids project coordinator; Robert Laubach, treasurer of the board; and Sally Laubach, board member prepare groceries for distribution to those in need.

Above: Carol Anderson, chair of Friends Sharing Food board of directors.

come and pick up food." The program currently assists approximately 175 households each week.

The third program is the **JACKSON COUNTY FOOD PANTRY**. With the help of volunteers, seven to eight thousand pounds of food are distributed each month to individuals and families who meet federal income guidelines.

With the support of more than 100 dedicated volunteers, board members and project coordinators, Friends Sharing Food is making a profound impact on families throughout the Jackson County area. Thanks to each one of them! ■

HOSPITAL EVENTS 2011

April 23, 8:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Brunch with the Easter Bunny

Black River Falls High School

May 11, 4:30 – 9:00 p.m.

First Aid Course

Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

May 14, 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Saturday Breastfeeding Class

Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

June 11, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Saturday Childbirth Education Class

Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

July 13, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Greater Black River Area Safety Council's Kids' Safety Camp

Lunda Park

For a complete list of hospital events,
please visit www.brmh.net.

Become a fan 

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for a full list of hospital
events and to view our
latest videos.