

# Momentum

Local people. True stories. Real advice.

BLACK RIVER  
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

NOVEMBER 2012

## Woman of Honor



# solving your SLEEPINESS

*"I'd go to work every day so tired I could fall asleep standing up."*

*"I had absolutely no attention span."*

*"I was irritable, very irritable."*

*"That foggy feeling you have after a couple nights of bad sleep, I felt it every day."*

*What do these people have in common?  
They all have sleep apnea.*

## SCIENCE OF SLEEP APNEA

Obstructive sleep apnea affects around 18 million Americans including celebrities Shaquille O'Neal, William Shatner and Regis Philbin.

Most people associate it with excessively loud snoring and extreme daytime tiredness, but they might not know why it causes these symptoms. Sleep apnea results from obstructions in the oropharynx (an airway in the back

of the throat). The obstructions disrupt airflow, which decreases the amount of oxygen getting into the blood stream and increases the amount of carbon dioxide that remains in the body.

"The number one fear of my sleep apnea patients is dying in their sleep," Etson Cameron, MD, Black River Memorial Hospital's certified sleep physician says. "But your body has mechanisms that defend against the build-up of carbon dioxide. Snoring is your body's way of waking you up and saying 'Hey buddy, you're not breathing.'"

This is the reason people with sleep apnea could fall asleep standing, feel irritable and lack attention. These constant "jolts" of snoring and waking up disrupt the body's sleep cycle.

Besides bad nights of sleep and the resulting tiredness, people with untreated sleep apnea are at a higher risk for heart attack and stroke due to the stress it puts on the heart. It also can put a strain on your relationship. Your husband or wife probably isn't getting the best sleep either if he or she is constantly nudging you to wake up and stop snoring.

## THE SLEEP STUDY

But how do you know if your excessive sleepiness really is the result of sleep apnea or another sleep disorder? If it's beginning to interfere with your quality of life, a sleep study can help determine whether a sleep disorder is the root cause.

Etson Cameron, MD,  
family physician at  
the Krohn Clinic and  
Black River Memorial  
Hospital's certified  
sleep physician.



Here's what our sleep apnea patients had to say  
after CPAP treatment:

"I thought my bad sleep  
was normal, but now I know  
it shouldn't be!"

"I'm alert!"

"I could tell the first night I used my  
CPAP machine that this was what a  
real good night's sleep felt like."

BRMH has a cutting-edge sleep lab where several tests can  
be performed to diagnose different sleep disorders.

One sleep study available at the BRMH Sleep Lab is a  
polysomnogram. This is what most people probably picture  
when they hear "sleep study." It's used to diagnose sleep  
apnea and patients actually sleep at the hospital while a  
technologist monitors brain activity, oxygen levels, heart  
rate, breathing and eye and leg movements.

During the test, if a technologist sees positive signs of sleep  
apnea, he or she will stop the study and begin fitting the  
patient with a CPAP machine. This tool provides a constant  
and steady air pressure through a hose and mask to  
facilitate proper breathing.

"As a sleep doctor, I've tried on most of the CPAP masks  
that are available," says Dr. Cameron. "And those  
we offer at BRMH are 200% more comfortable than  
any others I've seen."

Another sleep study available at BRMH is the  
ApneaLink™ Plus, a device patients can wear at  
home to help diagnose disordered breathing. The  
ApneaLink™ Plus records data about:

- Respiratory nasal airflow
- Snoring
- Blood oxygen saturation
- Pulse
- Respiratory effort during sleep

Based on this information, the device creates a report  
that becomes a useful tool in the diagnosis of—or for  
further investigation of—sleep-disordered breathing.

The ApneaLink™ Plus is offered free through the BRMH  
Sleep Lab with a physician's order. So talk with your  
primary care physician if you are interested.

## SLEEPING EASY

Once a sleep test is conducted and a potential disorder  
is diagnosed, treatment from a CPAP machine or other  
therapy truly can change your life. ■

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The BRMH Sleep Lab is homey and comfortable  
to facilitate normal sleep patterns.



# ANTIBIOTIC overdose

Your head hurts. Your nose is stuffy. You're achy and you have a terrible cough. Plus, it's the busiest week of the year at work and you have a family to take care of. You do not have time to be sick.

So you head to the doctor because you need to feel better TODAY. You are sure you need an antibiotic...

But in reality, that won't relieve the cold symptoms you are experiencing.

## DOESN'T AN ANTIBIOTIC CURE EVERYTHING?

Even though most people think that's true, antibiotics are medicines specifically designed to treat bacterial infections such as:

- Strep throat
- Ear infections
- Urinary tract infections
- Sinus infections

"However, antibiotics have been used in the past to treat many illnesses that we now know are caused by viruses, not bacteria," says Kaare Tingelstad, DO, and Medical Director of Black River Memorial Hospital's Emergency Department. "Antibiotics are actually not effective against viral infections like the common cold and the flu."

These viral illnesses don't even need a prescription treatment; they will last seven to ten days, and then go away on their own with the help of rest and fluids.

"The basic rule of thumb to differentiate between a bacterial infection and a viral illness is to determine what hurts," Rory Johnson, MD, a family physician at the Krohn Clinic says. "A bacterial infection will hurt in a specific location—your throat or your ear; a viral infection is systemic, and therefore, you feel achy all over and may have a low-grade fever."

And as with most medications, using an antibiotic brings with it the risk of physical side effects such as nausea and vomiting, diarrhea and stomach pain.

"We don't want to replace one symptom with another by prescribing an antibiotic when one is not needed," Dr. Tingelstad says.

Even beyond these physical side effects, there is a larger one that can result from excessive antibiotic use. It's called antibiotic resistance.

## WHAT IS ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE?

"Antibiotic resistance occurs when a bacteria is repeatedly exposed to the same antibiotic," says Dr. Johnson. "Bacteria can mutate and change how they function so that the next time they run into that antibiotic, it cannot kill them."

This can lead to major difficulties in how physicians are able to treat bacterial infections.

"Some bacterial infections will simply not have an antibiotic treatment if the resistance continues to grow," Dr. Tingelstad says. "There already are infections of the skin where the bacteria are not susceptible to traditional antibiotics."

And that leads to another challenging outcome—increases in hospital stays and treatment costs.

If we no longer have access to common oral antibiotics, what once only needed a simple prescription could eventually lead to a hospital stay.

These viral illnesses don't even need a prescription treatment; they will last seven to ten days, and then go away on their own with the help of rest and fluids.



*above:*  
Kaare Tingelstad, DO,  
and Medical Director  
of Black River Memorial  
Hospital's Emergency  
Department.

*left:*  
Rory Johnson, MD, a  
family physician at the  
Krohn Clinic.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

You can help prevent antibiotic resistance by asking your doctor if an antibiotic really is necessary for your illness. And if one is not needed, ask why.

"As physicians, we can all take an extra five minutes with patients to explain that antibiotics are not used to treat everything, and what the side effects would be if we did," Dr. Johnson says.

Another way to help is take a prescribed antibiotic as directed.

"Even if you feel better after a few days, finish your antibiotic prescription," Dr. Johnson says. "The bacteria most likely to mutate are the ones that survive the first few days of treatment."

Because antibiotics are a crucial and life-saving tool, help reduce antibiotic resistance through education and advice from your physician. ■

# COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Growing up in a small town like Black River Falls, it was natural for **Mary Van Gorden** to want to set out and see more of the world when she was older.

So she went to college in Milwaukee and New York City. She lived in San Antonio, Texas; Denver, Colorado; Tacoma, Washington; and Duluth, Minnesota. And she has traveled to Europe several times.

But what remained constant during all her travels and in all these places was her passion for helping others.

During her college days in Milwaukee, she spent part of each summer as a counselor at a Volunteers of America camp near Pardeeville, Wisconsin. In Tacoma, she volunteered as a Girl Scout leader, and in Duluth, she was involved in the Big Sisters program.

Then in the 1980s, Mary returned home to Black River Falls to help care for her aging parents. Now at the age of 82, she continues to spend her time helping others—this time in her hometown community.

"I was glad to come back home to Black River Falls," Mary says. "But when I no longer needed to care for my parents and having no family of my own, I had a lot of extra time on my hands. So, I have stayed busy by volunteering."

Much of Mary's current volunteer work is with Black River Memorial Hospital. She served on the hospital board of directors for nine years, and she has been a member of Partners (the hospital's auxiliary) for nearly 30 years—many of those years working as a Lifeline installer and as a volunteer at the information desk. She also is a past president and treasurer of Partners and now serves as Program Chairman and Public Policy Education Chairman.

Before leaving Duluth, Mary received a *Citation of Honor* from the Governor of Minnesota "for distinguished service" for her work in developing Duluth's medical rehabilitation center. And in 1996, she was honored with a *Community Service Award* from the Black River Falls Rotary Club.



Her extensive involvement with BRMH stems from her personal background in the medical field. After graduating from Milwaukee-Downer College, Mary served two years as an occupational therapist in the United States Army at San Antonio, Denver, and Tacoma and then went to New York University to receive her Master's Degree in occupational therapy.

That's when she moved to Minnesota to work in the rehabilitation field at the University of Minnesota Hospitals before serving 25 years as executive director of the Polinsky Medical Rehabilitation Center in Duluth.

"I was definitely drawn to the hospital since I'd been in the medical profession for so long," she says. "And I know the hospital staff and patients really appreciate the service and help all the hospital volunteers provide."

In addition to BRMH, Mary has a long history with the local library. She served on the building committee for the new Black River Falls Public Library in the 1990s, and she continues to be a benefactor for the Jackson County History Room.

Her commitment to the library comes not only from her love of reading, but also from another interest.

"I'm an avid genealogist," Mary says. "The library's history room has a lot of resources, which have helped me write three family history books."

Besides the volunteer work she does for BRMH and the library, Mary is an active member of her church and is

a volunteer for Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers. She also serves as a member of the Lunda Charitable Fund, which is a major donor to worthy projects throughout the area. In recent years, Mary also has given considerable time to helping establish Skyline Friends, a group dedicated to assisting the community's golf course.

"I think anybody who volunteers appreciates the good feelings you get out of it and the good friendships you build," Mary says. "But it's even more satisfying knowing that through volunteering, I can truly help an organization succeed." ■

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### Mary Jo Stern Registration Clerk Black River Memorial Hospital

A positive patient experience begins the moment you walk into the hospital. Mary Jo Stern spent 12 years as a registration clerk, making sure that happened at BRMH.

She helped patients at the front desk and emergency room with paperwork and getting them to their appointments as well as training new employees to work in the fiscal department.

"Being a trainer is an important responsibility because many of our department's employees are the first people patients see and talk with," Mary Jo says.

### HISTORY IN HEALTHCARE

Mary Jo's experience in healthcare started in high school as a nurse's aid at a local nursing home. She then became an operating room technician after graduating from college. And for

the past 21 years, she's been a first responder in her hometown of Melrose.

"I've always liked working in healthcare," Mary Jo says. "Working one-on-one with patients has allowed me to meet and get to know so many different people."

But it's not just the patients she enjoys; Mary Jo says she likes pretty much everything about working in healthcare—especially at BRMH.

### BEST PLACE TO WORK

"We have a sign out front saying BRMH is one of the best places to work, and it truly is," she says. "Everything from how your co-workers and the administration team treat you, to the benefits and the opportunities for advancement is above and beyond anything around."

When Mary Jo retired in October 2012, she said she'd truly miss her job, BRMH, her co-workers and patients.



Before becoming a registration clerk, Mary Jo spent 21 years working in the car business. It was only after BRMH's emergency room manager at the time—who was a good friend—encouraged Mary Jo to apply at the hospital that she returned to healthcare. And she's so glad she did.

But Mary Jo is excited to travel with her husband and to read more. Most of all, she can't wait to welcome (and spoil) her first grandchild, who's due in December. ■

**#1 IN WISCONSIN**  
**#11 IN THE NATION**



## HOSPITAL EVENTS 2012

Become a fan 

Sunday, December 2, 5:30 p.m.

### **Love Lights Tree Lighting Ceremony**

Black River Memorial Hospital

Monday, December 3, 12 – 1 p.m.

### **Better Breather's Club Meeting**

BRMH Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Thursday, December 6, 7 – 9 p.m.

### **Evergreen Memorial Service**

BRMH Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Friday and Saturday, December 7 and 8  
6 – 9 p.m. and 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

### **Weekender Childbirth Education Class**

BRMH Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

January 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2013, 6:30 – 9 p.m.

### **Childbirth Education Series**

BRMH Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Saturday, January 12, 2013, 9 – 10:30 a.m.

### **Breastfeeding Class**

BRMH Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Wednesday, January 23, 2013, 12 – 5:30 p.m.

### **Partners of BRMH Blood Drive**

Armory – Black River Falls, WI

Visit our website at **[www.brmh.net](http://www.brmh.net)** for  
a full list of hospital events and to view our  
latest videos.