

LOCAL PEOPLE. TRUE STORIES. REAL ADVICE.

# MOMENTUM

SPRING 2024

## EXCELLENT CARE

*close to home*



From caring for your baby bump to customizing your in-home care, BRMH is with you on your health journey.

Care for every stage of life.



# Letter from our CEO

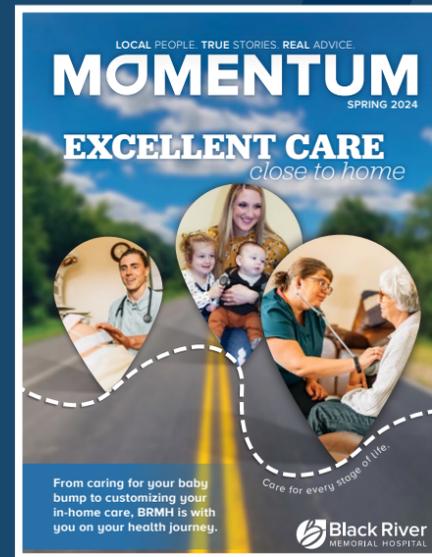
Welcome to the first Momentum of the new year – an issue that showcases the vital community collaborations that empower Black River Memorial Hospital to deliver excellent care, close to home.

From the benefits of a mom and her newborn establishing care with the same doctor (Page 4) to expert advice from a new podiatry provider (Page 12) to the successful redesign of our Care at Home line of services (Page 18), collaborations and partnerships with providers and organizations locally, regionally and beyond provide you with easy access to excellent care.

Yes, the future is bright here at Black River Memorial Hospital, and we are excited to share this next phase of our journey – and all of its challenges and successes – as part of our most important community partnership: our partnership with you.

Sincerely,  
Carl Selvick

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# From Pregnancy to Parenthood

*The unique benefit of mom and baby having the same doctor*

**F**rom the very moment those delicate pink lines fade across the pregnancy test, expectant parents find themselves faced with a long list of decisions to make. From mapping out the birth plan to selecting the perfect hue for the nursery walls, every choice holds significance.

In the midst of this whirlwind, there stands a pivotal decision, one that holds the key to ensuring the well-being of your newest family member – selecting an obstetric provider. It is safe to say this decision does not rest lightly on anyone’s shoulders. Dr. Jesse Susa, a Family Medicine Doctor at Krohn Clinic and the compassionate Medical Director of Black River Memorial Hospital’s (BRMH) Obstetric Department, understands the weight of this choice. He knows that entrusting the care of your precious bundle of joy to an obstetric provider is a decision that stirs both excitement and apprehension. “When selecting an obstetric provider, it is crucial families have someone alongside them whom they trust and are comfortable with,” expresses Dr. Susa.



Dr. Susa bonding with one of his primary care patients.

Choosing a local provider offers a sense of comfort and familiarity. Dr. Susa reveals local obstetrical providers wear more than one hat – they are also family medicine providers. This means you have the privilege of selecting a provider who already feels like an old friend, someone you’re comfortable entrusting the care of your little one to. Dr. Susa’s eyes light up as he recounts the times he’s witnessed this concept come to life. “One of my favorite parts of the job is watching families grow and develop. Providing prenatal care for my patients, being there for the labor and delivery of their newborn, providing postpartum care for mom, and then being able to provide care for that child as they grow up is an incredibly rewarding experience.”

According to Dr. Susa, when mom and baby establish care with the same provider, they are likely to experience many positive impacts to their care such as:

- Deepened Patient-Provider Bond**  
Pregnancy is a deeply personal journey, and the experience is different for everyone. Opting to have the same provider throughout pregnancy and beyond creates a solid foundation for a strong and trusting relationship between the provider and expectant parents.
- Effortless Communication**  
Juggling communication should be the last thing on any expectant parent’s mind. Having the same provider overseeing preconception, prenatal, delivery, and postpartum care promotes seamless communication between parents and their care team.
- Local Access**  
Local providers bring a gift of accessibility and ease. By choosing a familiar, nearby provider, expectant parents benefit from consistent checkups, catching potential issues early, and facilitating timely interventions when necessary. Dr. Susa empathizes with the heightened anxiety surrounding labor and delivery. “A huge benefit of keeping your obstetric care local is that the provider doing your prenatal care is, on average, 90% likely to personally deliver your baby.”

While there are numerous benefits to mom and baby having the same provider, Dr. Susa reinforces the importance of personalized, appropriate care. “While BRMH stands equipped to manage emergencies, certain high-risk scenarios may warrant a transition to a specialized hospital,” he explains. “We are always advocating for the care plan that serves the family the best.”

In a time where personalized care approaches are taking center stage, the benefits of mom and baby having the same provider cannot be overstated. The heightened consistency of care offered by having the same provider throughout pregnancy and beyond not only provides parents with a high-quality, personalized experience, but it encourages the best possible start for their little one.

To learn more about the local providers eager to support your family, and explore BRMH's modern facility offerings, please visit [hospital.brmh.net/obstetrics](https://hospital.brmh.net/obstetrics)

To establish obstetrical care with a local family medicine provider, reach out to Krohn Clinic at 715-284-4311



## About the Doc

**Favorite Community Activity:** Spending time with his family at the Lunda Community Center.

**Favorite Part of The Job:** “Developing meaningful relationships with my patients.”

**Fun Fact:** Dr. Susa is an Advanced Life Support Obstetrics (ALSO) course instructor which has allowed him to share his expertise on navigating obstetric emergencies with a number of physicians across the country.

# BREAK FREE

from AUB

*Dr. Cunningham's take on navigating the impacts of abnormal uterine bleeding (AUB) and finding a treatment that is right for you*

**I**t's safe to say we each have our own unique concept of **normal**, especially when it pertains to our health and well-being. Factors like genetics, personal experiences, and education shape this diverse perspective. When it comes to women's health, the monthly occurrence known as menstruation often raises questions regarding what qualifies as **normal**.

This widespread uncertainty and lack of education has led to a concerning issue: numerous women unknowingly suffering from abnormal uterine bleeding, commonly referred to as AUB. Dr. Kaitlyn Cunningham, Family Medicine Doctor at Krohn Clinic, recognizes the urgency of bringing awareness to this issue so women who are struggling with AUB know they are not alone and have options to experience relief.

"Generally speaking, I would describe AUB as anything outside of normal menstrual bleeding. This could encompass prolonged or heavy periods, bleeding in between periods, irregularly spaced periods, or even the absence of periods entirely," she educates. Dr. Cunningham goes on to explain that the complexity for many women lies in the challenge of determining the normalcy of their own cycle. "Menstrual bleeding is a topic that is not discussed very openly," Cunningham shares. "This has led to a general lack of knowledge on the topic. I aim to educate all of my female patients on this topic and ensure they are provided a safe space to discuss their health concerns openly."

When gauging the regularity of your menstrual cycle, Dr. Cunningham offers valuable guidance. "A cycle occurring every 24 to 38 days is within the normal range," she highlights. Deviations from this timeframe could potentially signify an abnormality. Furthermore, she details that the duration of a typical cycle should span around 7 to 9 days.

When determining the regularity of one's cycle, it is also important to consider the intensity of menstrual flow. The intensity of one's period can vary due to a variety of factors, including genetics, which is why it is always best to openly discuss your symptoms with your primary care provider. Dr. Cunningham advises that if you are changing a regular tampon or pad every one to two hours, this would qualify as a heavy flow. She also reinforces that any bleeding in between

**“Menstruation is a shared experience, and discussing it openly is pivotal to protecting women's health.”**



cycles, commonly referred to as "spotting" is considered abnormal and should be discussed with one's provider.

There are a variety of underlying conditions that can cause AUB such as bleeding disorders, an endometrial polyp, fibroids, adenomyosis, ovulatory dysfunction, and endometrial cancer. Dr. Cunningham reassures that a majority of underlying conditions are a result of ovulatory dysfunction, polyps, and fibroids – which can all be addressed and treated almost immediately. "Both surgical and non-surgical treatments are available. When determining what treatment is best for the patient, every approach needs to be personalized," states Dr. Cunningham. "Typically, treatment recommendations depend on what stage of life the patient is in and how severe their symptoms are." While a majority of AUB symptoms can be managed medically, there are a variety of long-term solutions offered as well, such as a hysteroscopy (commonly performed to remove polyps or fibroids), a hysterectomy (performed to remove all or part of the uterus), and endometrial ablation (procedure to reduce tissue in the uterine lining and reduce blood flow).

When it comes to pinpointing the underlying causes of AUB and conducting screenings for endometrial cancer, Dr. Cunningham explains there are two types of biopsies commonly performed: in-office and under anesthesia. Regular biopsies are a must for those at high risk of endometrial cancer, including individuals with genetic ties to the disease and those dealing with conditions like diabetes, obesity, and PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome). There are a variety of additional situations that would constitute an endometrial biopsy such as: being 45 years old or older and experiencing changes in one's cycle, being under the age of 45 with a body mass index (BMI) over 35, experiencing chronic ovulation problems, and seeing large time gaps between periods.

Dr. Cunningham champions open conversations, urging patients to speak candidly about their uterine bleeding concerns with their primary care provider. "Menstruation is a shared experience, and discussing it openly is pivotal to protecting women's health," she emphasizes.

For those concerned with their uterine bleeding patterns, taking the first step is key – book an appointment with your primary care provider. Most conditions can be diagnosed and treated locally, providing the relief patients deserve without delay. If you are being burdened by AUB, now is the time to break free!



## About the Doc

**Favorite Community Activities:** Book clubs, foundation trail, Lake Wazee, and playing pickleball at the Lunda Community Center.

**Favorite Part of The Job:** "Being able to talk to thousands of people a year. I am able to connect with them on a deep level and build genuine relationships, which provides me the opportunity to treat patients holistically."

**Fun Fact:** Dr. Cunningham went to medical school in the Dominican Republic, where her entire first year of schooling was in Spanish.



# STAYING AHEAD of Your Health

*Preventative health screenings that can save your life*

**I** imagine you are working on your computer and the screen freezes. The next day it starts to overheat and the day after that it will not turn on at all. Finally, you break down and take it to a technician.

After a quick screening, the technician informs you that what first started as a small malware bug a couple of days ago has quickly turned into a complete infestation. Ultimately, it is recommended that you purchase a brand-new computer. Upon leaving, the technician mentions that if you had brought it in right away, they likely could have salvaged the hard drive. You leave thinking, "I wish I would have known that sooner."

Now, compare the imaginary situation above to your health – something you cannot simply purchase from a store. When it comes to your overall well-being, the the last thing you want to find yourself saying is, "I wish I would have known sooner." The best approach to avoiding this remorse is to establish care with a primary care provider. Through annual checkups, your provider can address and manage existing conditions while recommending tests and screenings that are relevant to your future health.

During an annual checkup, your provider may recommend screening tests that are designed to identify and prevent potential health complications. These screenings serve as a glimpse into your future, providing you and your family with the health-related answers you deserve. If you live within Jackson County, you have access to five commonly recommended screening tests right in your backyard!

## Low-Dose CT

When compared to a traditional CT scan, a low-dose CT scan offers a lower amount of radiation to the patient – making it safer for regular screenings and reducing potential health risks. The low-dose CT is a unique type of X-ray that provides clear images of your organs, bones, and tissues. The scan helps to identify conditions such as lung cancer. Those 55-77 years old with a significant history of smoking are considered good candidates for this screening. Family history, occupational exposure, and lifestyle can also be useful when determining one's eligibility.

## Colonoscopy

Commonly used to screen for colon cancer and other colorectal diseases, a colonoscopy is a medical procedure that allows for the inspection of one's colon lining with a flexible fiberoptic camera. During the procedure, doctors are on the lookout for any abnormalities, such as polyps, ulcers, inflammation, or signs of colorectal cancer. If abnormalities are found, doctors can perform biopsies for further examination. The U.S. Preventative Services Task Force recommends that adults aged 45 to 75 have a colonoscopy every 10 years, although more frequent screenings may be recommended based on family history and other risk factors.

## 3D Mammogram

A 3D Mammogram is an advanced screening technique used to detect breast cancer. The 3D mammogram builds upon traditional 2D mammography by capturing multiple images of the breast from different angles and then reconstructing them into a three-dimensional view. With a 3D visual representation, radiologists are provided with a more detailed and comprehensive image of the breast tissue – improving detection and reducing patient call-backs. Women should consider getting their first mammogram between 40 and 50 years of age and either yearly or every other year after based on risk factors. All women are advised to speak with their primary care provider when determining what screening routine is best for them.

## Bone Density

A bone density screening is a non-invasive test that measures the strength and density of one's bones. The screening is primarily used to assess the risk of osteoporosis (bone thinning) and to monitor changes in bone health over time. This screening utilizes a low-dose X-ray to measure how much calcium and other minerals are present in a specific segment of the bone which helps to determine risk of fracture. If a bone density screening identifies either osteopenia (mild bone thinning) or osteoporosis (severe bone thinning), it can prompt a conversation about keeping bones healthy and strengthening bones through various treatments. Females who are post-menopausal and/or at least 65 years old are good candidates for bone density screenings.

## Dermoscopy

Dermoscopy is a screening technique utilized to examine skin lesions, moles, and growths. The screening is performed with a dermatoscope, which is essentially a small tool with a built-in light and magnifying lens. Providers utilize the dermatoscope to detect serious skin lesions - like melanoma - or monitor other potentially suspicious skin changes. This screening can help determine which lesions need to be biopsied (removal of a tissue sample), which lesions need to be completely removed, and what lesions can be left alone. This screening is suitable for any individual with concerns about different skin markings. Often, a dermoscopy screening can be completed on the same day as a patient's annual checkup.

**To schedule a preventative screening or discuss local options, please reach out to your primary care provider.**

# REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

*How one local procedure takes patients from pain to possibilities*

**B**uckling your seatbelt, washing your hair, or grabbing a tool from the shelf in your garage – all seemingly simple actions, right? *Think again.*

These everyday tasks that most of us take for granted can become unexpected battlegrounds for those suffering from chronic shoulder pain. In a world where each twist, lift, and reach can trigger discomfort, the very essence of daily life takes on a new, challenging dimension.

A total shoulder replacement serves as a glimmer of hope for those enduring the daily burden brought on by shoulder pain. Turning *ouch* into *ahh*, this surgical procedure is aimed at reducing patients' pain and restoring their mobility. The procedure consists of replacing one's shoulder joint with a prosthetic implant.

So, how does one determine if a total shoulder replacement is a viable next step on their journey to finding relief? Dr. Mark McCarthy, Orthopedic Surgeon at Black River Memorial Hospital (BRMH), details that an orthopedic consult is beneficial for any patient whose symptoms, such as disabling pain or loss of motion, are beginning to worsen. Over time, and as symptoms worsen, patients may also begin to experience impacts on their daily living and sleeping patterns as a result of chronic shoulder pain, which can also serve as a good indication that one is due for an orthopedic consult. Dr. McCarthy identifies "motions such as reaching up and away or up and backward" as commonly painful movements for shoulder replacement candidates.

When managing chronic pain on a less severe level, Dr. McCarthy advises patients to test out conservative treatment methods such as physical therapy, routine stretching, and proper administration of Tylenol and ibuprofen to minimize their pain.

Similar to experiencing any other type of localized pain, patients suffering from chronic shoulder pain are often curious as to what caused their discomfort. According to Dr. McCarthy, there are a variety of explanations for shoulder pain such as repetitive overhead work, past injuries, sports trauma, prolonged manual labor, or even having a pre-disposed genetic condition. But no matter the root cause, McCarthy testifies that the procedure affords patients the ability to reclaim their quality of life. "A majority of my patients divulge they wish they would have done the procedure sooner," Dr. McCarthy relays. While most patients find themselves grateful for the procedure, Dr. McCarthy stresses the importance of encouraging the patient to be in the

driver's seat when it comes to treatment decisions. "I always tell my patients, 'You're driving the bus,' and what I mean by that is their treatment path is 100% up to them. I can provide recommendations, but at the end of the day, the patient has the final say."

Through his experience, Dr. McCarthy recognizes the most common hesitation for patients considering the procedure is the amount of time they will have to spend away from work. His rebuttal to this is an impressive statistic – 90% of patients fully recover between six weeks and three months after their procedure. Patients can expect to wear a sling for four to six weeks after surgery with activity limitations. McCarthy emphasizes physical therapy and activity, per doctors' orders, are crucial to a successful recovery and reaping optimal benefits.

There are many things in life we must learn to live with, but Dr. McCarthy wants to assure you that chronic shoulder pain is not one of them! To discuss your chronic shoulder pain and explore treatment options, contact your primary care provider to set up an orthopedic consultation.



## About the Doc

**Favorite Part of The Job:** "Being able to improve people's quality of life, no matter their age."

**Fun Fact:** Dr. McCarthy has a sweet spot for sports medicine.



# Kickin' YOUR PAIN

Dr. Thompson's insight on managing foot and ankle pain

**Y**ou likely won't find anyone more passionate about foot health than Dr. Nicholas Thompson, Black River's new podiatry provider. His enthusiasm for helping others with their foot and ankle pain started at a young age when he landed a job working for a shoe retailer. As his interest and curiosity about foot health grew, so did his desire to help others, leading to him becoming a doctor of podiatric medicine.

Here, Dr. Thompson shares his insights related to managing foot and ankle pain. For those requiring advanced treatment, he performs a variety of procedures at Black River Memorial Hospital.



## Get Started on the Right Foot:

Dr. Thompson believes getting people started on the right foot at a young age can make a world of difference in their quality of life. After all, foot and ankle conditions left unaddressed can lead to serious consequences such as pain and discomfort, impaired mobility, gait abnormalities, and deformities.

Dr. Thompson says toe walking and delayed walking are common reasons parents bring their children to a podiatrist. "For parents debating whether or not to schedule a podiatry appointment for their child, my recommendation is simple: if it is keeping you up at night, make an appointment," he says. "I enjoy providing families answers, reassurance, and peace of mind."

## Do Some Sole Searching:

It's likely you've heard the expression, "if the shoe fits, wear it," but Dr. Thompson does not recommend this philosophy when it comes to actual shoes. He confirmed that while platforms and high heels may level up your fashion game, they can be detrimental to your foot health and comfort in the long run. Dr. Thompson commonly recommends a well-constructed, mesh running shoe to his patients. "The mesh allows your foot to breathe, reducing the risk of fungal and bacterial growth," he educates. "It is also important to find a shoe that avoids stitching over bony or sensitive areas on the feet."

## Heel at Home:

If your symptoms have just started and are subtle, at-home management may be an option. First and foremost, Dr. Thompson recommends activity modification. You should not be experiencing active pain, and if you are, it's time to adjust. If your pain is prohibiting you from participating in an activity that brings you joy, Dr. Thompson recommends finding a way to participate that removes pain from the equation. He also recommends heating the area

prior to activity and incorporating cool compression post-activity. For acute injuries, turn to RICE: rest, ice, compress, and elevate. If you've exhausted at-home management methods, it's time to seek professional help.

## Treat Your Pain at BRMH

For those experiencing painful symptoms, Dr. Thompson wants to highlight there are surgical and non-surgical options available locally that can help to alleviate pain, regain mobility, and, most importantly, restore quality of life. There are a variety of situations where a visit to the podiatrist can provide same-day, immediate relief. "Delaying a consultation to discuss symptoms is only going to delay a patient's recovery," Dr. Thompson says. Some of the ailments for which BRMH offers treatment options, including surgery, include:

**Plantar Fasciitis.** "For patients suffering from plantar fasciitis, the best treatment is rest," Dr. Thompson explains, which "can help reduce inflammation and pain." Other treatment remedies include regularly icing and stretching the affected area, finding proper footwear and orthotics, and, in severe cases, physical therapy or injections.

**Bunions.** As bunions progress and worsen, it is common for the pain associated with them to as well. "Many patients choose to undergo bunion removal surgery, as it offers the most relief from severe bunion discomfort," Dr. Thompson says. "The procedure involves removing the bunion and realigning the bones."

**Ingrown Toenail.** "Depending on the severity of the ingrown toenail, initial recommendations may include home remedies such as warm-water soaks and proper nail trimming," Dr. Thompson advises. "In cases of chronic reoccurrence and severe pain, surgical options, such as partial or complete toenail removal, may be suggested." Surgical interventions to prevent complete nail regrowth are also available to the proper candidate.

**Hammertoe.** Non-surgical approaches often involve wearing shoes with ample toe space and utilizing custom orthotic inserts to aid in repositioning the toe. In more advanced cases, surgery might be recommended to straighten and realign the affected toe. "Addressing a hammertoe in its early stages can prevent it from becoming more rigid or challenging to treat," Dr. Thompson says.

To schedule a consultation with Dr. Thompson, please reach out to Krohn Clinic at 715-284-4311.

## About the Doc

**Favorite Community Activities:** Kayaking, biking, and anything else outdoors!

**Favorite Part of The Job:** "My favorite part is how routinely I can treat someone's condition the same day I meet them."

**Fun Fact:** Dr. Thompson utilizes a large tool box to store instruments in his exam room.



# WORLD-CLASS CARE, Home-Town Feel

*A carpal tunnel release technique that seems too good to be true*

**C**arpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) - the hand's equivalent of "I've got pins and needles!" - affects millions of Americans each year. The condition, which causes numbness and tingling in the hands and fingers, typically leaves those suffering with two options for relief - surgical and non-surgical treatment. But ultimately, when symptoms become severe, that choice narrows to carpal tunnel release (CTR) surgery.

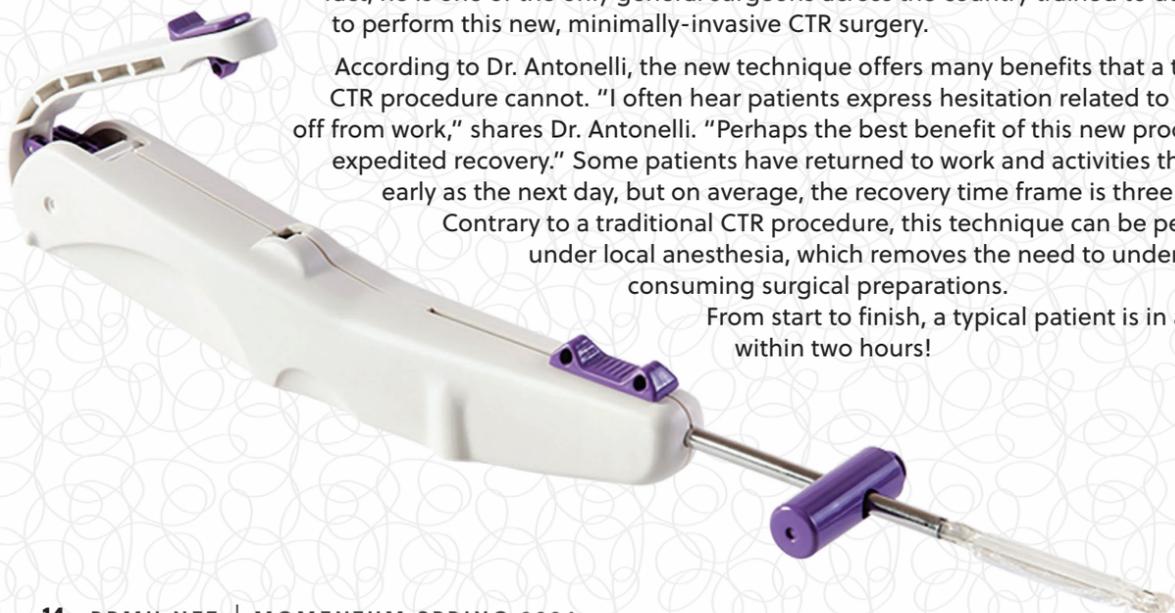
Typically performed in an operating room under anesthesia, traditional CTR procedures involve weeks to months of recovery, often accompanied by pain medication and potential physical rehabilitation. With all a CTR procedure entails, it is very common for patients to put off having surgery until their symptoms become unbearable - which can ultimately result in permanent damage to the nerves.

Luckily for local patients, Dr. Darin Antonelli, general surgeon at Black River Memorial Hospital, is changing the game by offering a new, cutting-edge CTR technique. "The procedure itself and the use of real-time ultrasound guidance is not new," explains Dr. Antonelli. "Rather, it is the use of a new, innovative tool paired with real-time ultrasound guidance that sets this procedure apart." Dr. Antonelli is currently **one of only three surgeons** offering this sort of CTR procedure in Wisconsin. In fact, he is one of the only general surgeons across the country trained to utilize this tool to perform this new, minimally-invasive CTR surgery.

According to Dr. Antonelli, the new technique offers many benefits that a traditional CTR procedure cannot. "I often hear patients express hesitation related to taking time off from work," shares Dr. Antonelli. "Perhaps the best benefit of this new procedure is the expedited recovery." Some patients have returned to work and activities they love as early as the next day, but on average, the recovery time frame is three to six days.

Contrary to a traditional CTR procedure, this technique can be performed under local anesthesia, which removes the need to undergo time consuming surgical preparations.

From start to finish, a typical patient is in and out within two hours!



Dr. Antonelli



**“I've had both procedures, and the difference is incredible. With Dr. Antonelli's new technique, I was able to recover so much quicker with minimal sensitivity. The new technique is much easier - especially for those still working!”**  
**- Lynn Pratt**

When the procedure is complete, patients will be left with a very small wrist incision. This means patients can avoid lengthy and painful scars that oftentimes result from traditional CTR procedures. Patients are able to utilize and move their hands around immediately after the procedure. This new technique significantly reduces the chances of needing post-surgical therapy and pain medication for successful healing.

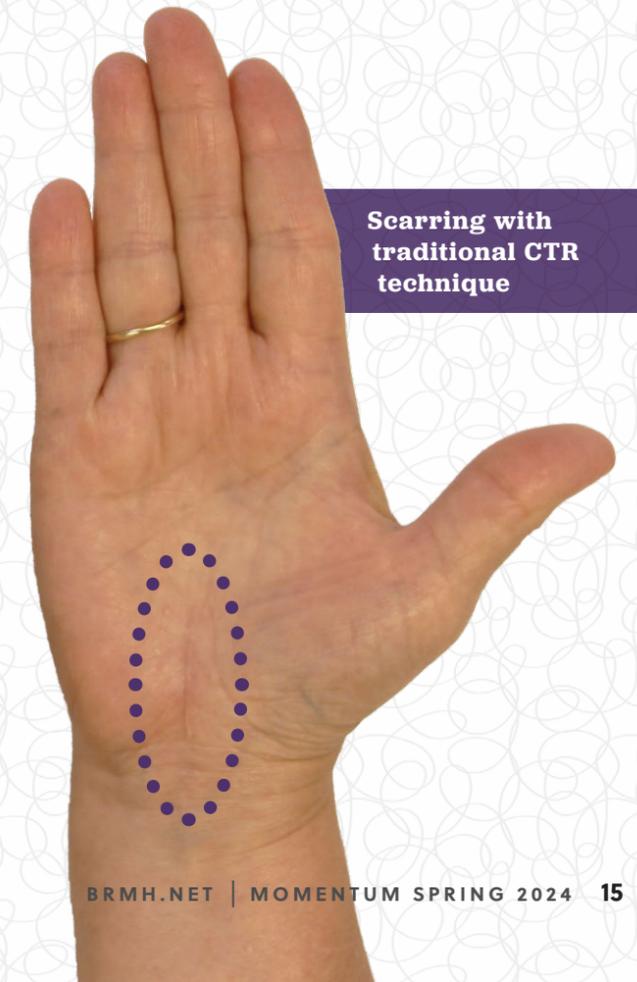
This cutting-edge procedure is a true testament to the innovative, excellent care offered right in your backyard! Dr. Antonelli's proactive approach is sure to impact the lives of countless individuals suffering from hand-related discomfort, and if that is you - what are you waiting for?

**To schedule a consultation with Dr. Antonelli, call Krohn Clinic at 715-284-4311.**

Scarring with new minimally-invasive CTR technique



Scarring with traditional CTR technique



# On the Road to Recovery

How a transitional care pit stop helps patients reclaim their independence

**B**eing discharged from the hospital can be an intimidating experience, especially if you or your family are uneasy about managing care, mobility, and medication requirements at home. It's natural to feel overwhelmed, as hospitals are staffed with skilled medical professionals, whereas our homes are normally not. Whether it's for yourself or a loved one, a smooth and effective transition from hospital to home is what everyone hopes for. This is where Black River Memorial Hospital's (BRMH) transitional care program can make a world of difference.

Transitional care, commonly referred to as swing bed, encourages the safe and successful transition of patients from one healthcare setting to another, such as from a hospital to a home or rehabilitation facility. Think of a transitional care stay as a pit stop on the journey to a patient's destination, offering short-term support to improve patient outcomes, maintain continuity of care, and reduce the risk of complications and readmissions.

Typically, patients who enroll in the program are on the tail end of a hospitalization, surgery, or significant medical event. The program is designed

for those who may not require full hospital admission, but would likely benefit from some additional support before returning home or going to their identified destination. Having access to necessary support and care during such a crucial time is the purpose behind transitional care. The program offers patients the assistance they need to recover successfully while providing their loved one's peace of mind.

Each transitional care stay is unique and tailored to a patient's individual needs. Through meeting basic program admission requirements, patients

who enroll in the program gain access to the following services: in-house provider oversight, skilled nursing, nutrition, therapy (speech, respiratory, occupational, and physical), pharmacy, and social work. Patients are equipped with a comprehensive care team built specifically for their individual care needs. And, while each transitional care stay looks different, the goal remains the same – to ensure patients successfully complete the program and meet their individualized goals.

Patients are cared for by nursing, rehabilitation, and social work staff and can expect provider visits weekly. BRMH also offers 24/7 access to a team of hospitalists, to accommodate those patients who have a more active diagnosis.

Even though the transitional care program is in a hospital environment, patients are encouraged to start adapting back to normal life. They are welcome to wear their own clothing and shoes and bring any personal items that help them feel more like themselves. Family and friends are invited to visit and even take patients

on small outings if they so wish. To sweeten the deal, patients can take advantage of private, in-room dining or venture down to our café for a more social experience – some even comparing the stay to a 5-star hotel!

Ultimately, all patients will be discharged. When discharged from transitional care, approximately 88% of patients have met or exceeded their self-care goals, and 84% have met or exceeded their mobility goals – making the experience much less intimidating. Additionally, a patient's care team helps establish follow-up appointments and make connections with area resources and services.

To learn more about what a transitional care stay may entail, visit: [hospital.brmh.net/transitional-care-program](https://hospital.brmh.net/transitional-care-program)



# Care at Home

## Designed for You

### A new program focused on keeping patients safe and successful at home as long as possible

Connecting with the community is at the core of what we do every day at Black River Memorial Hospital, and strengthening those connections sometimes requires making difficult decisions that provide opportunities for better patient care over the long term.

One such change occurred recently with our in-home care services. After our Hospice and Home Health programs sustained significant and unsustainable losses over the previous five years, it was clear we needed to rethink how we offered these valuable services to our community members.

After assessing our opportunities and carefully crafting a plan to move forward, our redesigned Care at Home line of services launched in early 2023. The service's success can be seen in the increase in the number of people who have been able to be safe, comfortable, and successful at home for as long as possible – the objective of the redesign.

Compared to the previous year, 65% more unique patients were served for in-home outpatient physical, occupational, and speech therapy in 2023. In addition, there was an increase in

visits with Home and Respiratory Equipment personnel, while nursing and supportive home care performed steadily. As difficult as the transition has been, the hard work is showing good results with a sustainable model that ensures this critical community healthcare need is met.

#### Chronic Care Management (CCM)

Chronic Care Management is a program offered by the Black River Healthcare Clinic with the main goal of assisting patients in managing their chronic health conditions and connecting them to community resources available in Jackson County.

“Chronic conditions such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and Alzheimer’s can be overwhelming for a patient and their loved ones to manage,” says Angie Marciulionis, Director of Black River Healthcare Clinic. “We are here to not only provide immediate care but also to assist patients and their families in accessing additional services such as In-Home Therapy, Supportive Home Care, Home Health Nursing, Hospice, or Medical Equipment when needed.”

**In 2023: 65%** More patients seen for in-home therapies | **77%** Increase in visits with Home & Respiratory Equipment personnel



Patients and their loved ones receive assistance from the care team with new diagnosis education, medication management, and overall care planning to support them on their health journey. Depending on their condition, patients can expect monthly communication via a telephone call or via video chat, optimizing accessibility and oversight of care.

Patients play an active role in healthcare decisions and set personal goals aimed at achieving a higher quality of life.

#### In-Home Outpatient Therapy

Physical, occupational, and speech therapy is available for those patients with medical restrictions that make it difficult to leave home to attend hospital-based therapy.

#### Home and Respiratory Equipment

This service, provided under our Durable Medical Equipment Accreditation, helps ensure patients have local access to respiratory equipment and supplies, such as

Oxygen, nebulizers, and CPAP machines/supplies. Assistance with equipment setup and operation is offered, along with 24/7 oxygen support.

#### Supportive Home Care

A trained, supportive care worker completes these services and encompasses self-care management such as bathing, incontinence care, and mobility assistance.

**Managing obesity, diabetes, and chronic disease was one of Jackson County’s top eight health needs, according to the 2022 Jackson County Community Health Needs Assessment. Subsequently, cancer and heart disease were the top causes of death across Jackson County from 2016 to 2020.**

If you are interested in learning more about how our Care at Home line of services can support you or your loved ones, we encourage you to talk with your primary care provider to see if any of the service options are right for you or visit [hospital.brmh.net/care-at-home](http://hospital.brmh.net/care-at-home).

In addition, durable medical equipment for ambulation, home safety, and items such as gradient compression socks are available in the home and respiratory equipment department located in the hospital lobby.

Each Care at Home service line is independent and should not be construed as a comprehensive home health agency. If you are searching for a comprehensive home health agency, please call us at 715-284-3355, and we would be happy to provide you with information on home health agency options in Jackson County.



Visit our website at [BRMH.net](http://BRMH.net) and check out our Better You Blog!

**Nondiscrimination Statement:**

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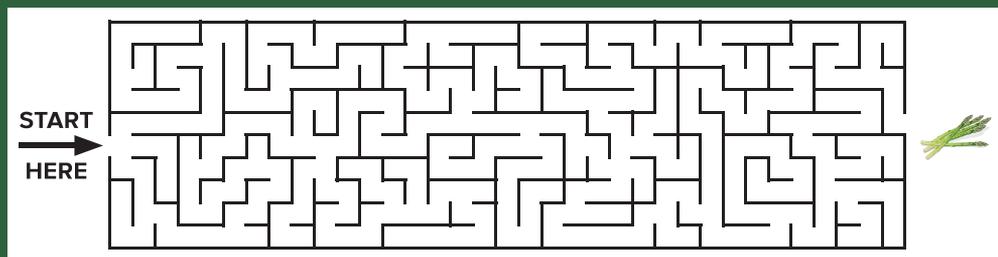
# Nutrition

## for your body and mind

### Spring Days Maze

Find your way through the maze to the piece of delicious asparagus!

Answer on the website:  
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### Stuffed Pepper Soup

This quick and easy stuffed pepper soup recipe is perfect as we are hit by the last few chilly days of early spring. It is a healthy option the whole family is sure to enjoy.

Prep Time: 10 min | Cook Time: 30 min. | Total Time: 40 min. | Servings: 5 | Serving Size: Approx. 2 Cups | Calories per Serving: 360

#### Ingredients:

- 1 lb lean ground beef
- Kosher salt & pepper to taste
- 1 Tbsp extra virgin oil
- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ tsp dried basil
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- 2 (14.5oz) cans fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- 1 (15oz) can tomato sauce
- 4 cups low-sodium beef broth
- 2 cups cooked white or brown rice
- Optional: shaved parmesan and roughly chopped fresh parsley for garnish

#### Instructions:

1. Heat a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the ground beef and use a spatula to break it up. Season with salt and pepper. Cook the beef until browned, stirring occasionally. Once fully cooked, drain the beef and transfer to a paper towel-lined plate. Set aside.
2. Heat the oil in the pot, then add the onion and bell peppers and saute for 3-4 minutes, until softened. Add the garlic, basil, oregano, and thyme and saute another 30 seconds.
3. Add the ground beef back to the pot along with the diced tomatoes, tomato sauce and beef broth. Cover the pot, bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat to low, and stir occasionally for 20 minutes. Note: If you haven't yet pre-cooked your rice, you can cook it while the soup is simmering.
4. Stir in the cooked rice. If you'd like a slightly thinner soup, feel free to add more broth. To serve, ladle into bowls and top with freshly chopped parsley.

