

Local people. True stories. Real advice.

Momentum

BLACK RIVER
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

FEBRUARY 2013



Bedtime Stories



Because of his CPAP treatment, Tom is no longer in a fog and doesn't have to worry about dozing off while driving.

LOOKING FOR SLEEP IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES?

Ken Ellenberger of Whitehall and Tom Novak of Alma Center were. That is until finding sleep in the right place—the Sleep Lab at Black River Memorial Hospital.

TOM NOVAK

Snoring. This is most definitely a strong warning sign of a sleep disorder such as sleep apnea. But it's not the only one. There are many more that often go unnoticed or ignored. For Tom Novak, ignoring these other symptoms almost cost him his life—and those of others.

"I was driving home from work, and just three miles from home, I fell asleep at the wheel and drove into a ditch," says Tom. "Thankfully, I didn't get hurt—even more important, I didn't run into another car and hurt anyone else."

Over several months, Tom noticed he was tired all of the time. He felt like "a zombie in the morning" and spent his days in a fog. Tom wrote it all off as a combination of working odd hours as a forklift operator, not getting to bed early enough and constantly being on the move with his two young grandchildren.

It was his wife, Sarah, who first noticed he was gasping for air so hard during the night that his body would jolt as if electrocuted. She was frightened Tom was going to die in his sleep, and Sarah had good reason to be concerned; she was diagnosed with sleep apnea herself several years ago at Black River Memorial Hospital.

That's where Tom first met Etson Cameron, MD, a.k.a. the sleep doctor. As soon as Dr. Cameron read the sleep disorder questionnaire Tom completed, he ordered a screening at BRMH's Sleep Lab.

"I was apprehensive about the process," says Tom. "I felt uncomfortable about people watching me while I was sleeping. But the staff was thorough in explaining the process and made me feel very comfortable."

Tom was diagnosed with sleep apnea and was given a continuous positive airway pressure, or CPAP, nasal mask. This supplies a constant and steady air pressure, which allows Tom to breathe on his own and not have to gasp for air while he sleeps. It took him a few nights to get used to wearing the mask, but now he hardly notices it.

"Now I have a lot more energy, am more alert and have an overall feeling of well-being," says Tom.

KEN ELLENBERGER

Enduring several years of terrible sleep, gasping for air at night and snoring so loudly he would wake himself up, Ken Ellenberger could literally fall asleep standing up.

He was sick and tired of being tired.

So in 2006, he saw a doctor in Eau Claire for a sleep disorder test. The doctor came in, talked for three minutes and then left. Ken still had questions and was hesitant about the entire test to begin with because of his claustrophobia.

This bad experience led Ken to cancel his sleep study, and the next year he switched to a family physician at the Krohn Clinic in Black River Falls—the town he was born and raised in. It was his new physician who referred Ken to Dr. Cameron. Because of the severity of Ken's symptoms, he recommended an immediate sleep study.

"I was still apprehensive about the actual test, but I also was to the point where I couldn't deal with the symptoms anymore," Ken says. "Plus, I was terrified I'd stop breathing completely one night and leave my wife and five children without a father."

So he set up a sleep study at BRMH. Unlike his first experience, Dr. Cameron and the BRMH Sleep Lab technicians thoroughly explained the details of the test—how it would be performed and what information would be collected—to help ease some of his fears.

The lab is set up like an actual bedroom, so Ken was able to watch a little TV, leave a light on and adjust the bed to ensure he was completely comfortable.

It was only two hours into the test that Ken was diagnosed with severe sleep apnea. In just those two hours, he had already stopped breathing 109 times. The average sleep apnea patient only stops breathing 14 – 19 times per hour.

Ken was fitted for a CPAP mask, and although it took him about a week to become comfortable with it, he knew from the first night it would be worth getting use to.

"That first night I wore it, I fell asleep within three minutes and slept, uninterrupted, for 14 hours," Ken says. "I woke up feeling like a million bucks with energy I never knew I could have."

See more of Tom and Ken's stories at brmh.net/sleeplab. ■

Ken has more faith in hometown doctors because they take more time with each patient and are part of the community.



The Sleep Doctor is in!

Attend our event to learn about common sleep disorder symptoms and treatments from sleep doctor Etson Cameron and Sleep Lab technician Celine Burns. You'll also be able to see real CPAP machines and win additional door prizes.

April 3, 6:30 p.m.
Black River Memorial Hospital
Register online at
brmh.net/sleeplab or
by calling 715-284-1325.

Chance to win a set of two TEMPUR-PEDIC pillows.

Class in SESSION

Over the past decade or two, fad diets have run rampant. One day carbs are bad; the next day, carbs are good and something else becomes forbidden. And what comes along with these constantly changing rules is a lot of misinformation on what healthy eating really is.

To help dispel the nutrition myths created by these fad diets and to get back to the basics of good nutrition, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics created National Nutrition Month, which is celebrated every March.

The purpose of National Nutrition Month is to turn the focus away from dieting and back to making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. These are the foundations of healthy living.

To help bring this national campaign to the communities of Jackson County, Black River Memorial Hospital's Registered Dietitian, Paula Przywojski, has developed a month-long, myth-busting nutrition program.

"This year's Nutrition Month theme is 'Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day,'" Paula says. "So through this series of classes, we want to show people how to fit well-balanced meals into their individual lifestyles."

The program consists of five sessions starting on February 25. They are all free-of-charge and open to the public. Unless noted, each session will be held at the hospital in the Dorothy Halvorson conference room.

One of Paula's goals is to change the mindset that healthy eating means deprivation. By learning how to create balanced meals, she hopes people stop being afraid to eat.



February 25, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. WHY DIETS DON'T WORK

During this session, you'll learn why following a diet may help you lose weight but doesn't help you keep it off. Also, you'll learn how some diets may not even be good for your body.

March 4, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. NUTRITION 101: THE TRUTH ABOUT CARBS

Carbohydrates have gotten such a bad rap, but they are actually an essential part of healthy eating. So, we'll show you how to appropriately incorporate them into meals.

March 11, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. NUTRITION 101: THE TRUTH ABOUT PROTEIN AND FLUID, THE FORGOTTEN NUTRIENT

This session will discuss how important protein is when planning your meals, what foods are the best sources of protein and how much you really need. It also will touch on what counts as a fluid in your diet and teach you how much fluid you should drink in a day.

March 18, Lunda Center, 6 – 8 p.m. WEIGHT OF THE NATION

Jackson County's obesity coalition, Jackson in Action, will present part of the HBO series "Weight of the Nation" to show the history behind the increase in obesity and diabetes in America. Afterward, a panel of experts including a dietitian, a physician and a public health nurse will lead a question-and-answer session and highlight the 500 Club—a healthy eating plan that uses well-balanced meals of 500 calories or less.

The BRMH cafeteria has served 500 Club meals for 10 years and local restaurants including fast food chains like McDonalds and Taco John's are also becoming 500 Club members.

Register by calling 715-284-1325.
Win door prizes at each session.
Seating is limited.

"...through this series of classes, we want to show people how to fit well-balanced meals into their individual lifestyles."

"This event will help Jackson in Action increase the community's efforts to decrease obesity and diabetes," Paula says. "This is especially important to Jackson County, since it's second in the state for the highest rates of obesity and diabetes."

March 25, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. NUTRITION 101: FAT FACTS AND PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

In this class, you'll learn the truths about fat and how to put your knowledge of carbs, proteins and fats together to create well-balanced and healthy meals. Everybody who attends also will enjoy a 500 Club meal from the BRMH cafeteria.

"This is the perfect way to end the program," Paula says. "It gives a real example of what putting everything together looks like."

The information in these five classes can benefit everyone, whether you want help with weight management, diabetes control or even reducing the risk of heart attack.

"Our society has made healthy eating overly complicated," Paula says. "So through this program, I hope to show people that it's not about focusing on what NOT to eat, but rather, what you SHOULD eat." ■

A circle on a map brought **Ron Wirtz** and his family to Black River Falls.

After Ron and his wife had their first two children, they decided it was time to move out of the city and closer to home—Wisconsin Rapids for Ron and Wausau for his wife.

This is where the circle comes in. Ron didn't want to move too far from his job at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, so he drew a circle incorporating all of Wisconsin within a two-hour drive from Minneapolis. And Black River Falls fell right on the outer edge.

Not only did Black River Falls present a charming community for Ron and his family to live and grow in, it also presented the opportunity for him to get involved with volunteer work.

"It's very easy to be anonymous in the big city," Ron says. "But in smaller towns there are fewer people and many organizations that need help."

To get his foot in the door, he started with his kids. As they got older and interested in sports, Ron got more involved with coaching. He's been the coach for each of his kid's first baseball teams and now helps coach other baseball and basketball teams of various grade levels.

"I love how coaching keeps me active in the sports I enjoy and how it helps me make sure my kids are active too," Ron says.

Ron's involvement with local athletics eventually moved beyond coaching. He now sits on the board of the Tiger Hoops Association, a youth basketball association working to develop stronger structure in basketball programs leading into high school.

Outside of athletics, Ron realized there were many community organizations that needed volunteers. So he branched out first to the Festival in the Park planning committee. During his time on the committee, he helped plan and market the festival's events at Lunda Park and secure contributions from local businesses.

"Fundraising and volunteers are essential to the Lunda Park's survival because the park is not

maintained by the city," Ron says. "So helping generate awareness of the park and its events is crucial."

Other places where Ron has volunteered include the Black River Falls school board, which he served on for four years, and more recently, being the chair of his church's budget committee and teaching CCD classes.

With four active kids, working from home and driving to Minneapolis a few times each month, it's hard to understand where Ron finds the time to volunteer so much.

"You make time," he says, also crediting his wife, Sarah, for helping him find time. "And once you get started, seeing the impact you make and the appreciation from those you help keeps you coming back." ■



Ron is skilled at juggling time for his volunteer work, family and career. He even finds extra time to play basketball two times a week with friends.

Kim Schlifer

Respiratory Care Practitioner
Black River Memorial Hospital

Kim Schlifer knows what it feels like to have trouble breathing.

Her own experience with childhood asthma inspired her to help other people breathe better. But it wasn't until Kim discovered a respiratory therapy program in college that she found a way to do so. By choosing this program, Kim put herself on a career path that eventually led her right back to the hospital where she was born—Black River Memorial Hospital.

After receiving a bachelor's degree and certificate in respiratory therapy from the University of Minnesota-Rochester/Mayo School of Health Sciences, Kim decided to stay and work in Rochester. However, her dream job was to work in a pulmonary function lab.

"When I heard BRMH was looking to start the lab, I jumped at the opportunity to move back and help," Kim says. "And because pulmonary function is my specialty, I actually got to develop the entire pulmonary rehab program and lab."

CARING FROM ALL DIRECTIONS

Now, as the lead therapist for the outpatient side of respiratory therapy, Kim has responsibilities both inside and outside the hospital. Inside, she's in charge of pulmonary rehab, pulmonary function testing, one-on-one tobacco cessation counseling and occupational health.

Kim also started the Better Breathers Club in June 2012 to expand the hospital's pulmonary care. The free support group for patients with pulmonary disease meets every other month and allows patients to stay connected with the



respiratory team and each other, ask questions after they finish rehab and continue to expand their knowledge of respiratory conditions.

Outside of the hospital, Kim gives presentations to employees of local businesses on how to quit smoking, and she teaches N-O-T: Not on Tobacco classes two times a year at Black River Falls High School. Kim also serves on the Jackson County Tobacco Coalition, a group of local citizens who meet monthly to discuss ways to spread tobacco awareness and prevention in Jackson County. ■

Momentum is published by Black River Memorial Hospital. The information contained in the magazine is to educate consumers about various health subjects and is not intended to replace professional medical advice or service. Personal health concerns should be brought to the attention of your physician or health professional prior to any change in medical treatment, routine exercise or diet.

HOSPITAL EVENTS 2013

Become a fan 

Mondays, February 25 – March 25

National Nutrition Month Series

See page 5 for details

March 5, 12, 19, and 26, 6:30 – 9 p.m.

Childbirth Education Series

BRMH Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Saturday, March 9, 9 – 10:30 a.m.

Breastfeeding Class

BRMH Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Wednesday, March 13, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Diabetes Education & Support Group Monthly Meeting

BRMH Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room #2

Wednesday, March 20, 12 – 5:30 p.m.

Partners of BRMH Blood Drive

BRF Armory

Saturday, March 30, 8:30 – 11 a.m.

Brunch with the Easter Bunny

Black River Falls High School

Monday, April 1, 12 – 1 p.m.

Better Breather's Club Meeting

BRMH Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Wednesday, April 3, 6:30 p.m.

Good Night Event

BRMH Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

Wednesday, April 10, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Diabetes Education & Support Group Monthly Meeting

BRMH Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room #2

Friday and Saturday, April 12 and 13
6 – 9 p.m. and 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Weekender Childbirth Education Class

BRMH Dorothy Halvorson Conference Room

April 22nd – 26th

National Volunteer Week

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