

Barch brothers love the taste of their own medicine

By Patrick Dunne | Staff Writer
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After brothers Mackie and Justin Barch, third-generation Kensington residents, were both diagnosed with a blood-clotting disorder and put on medication, the two went into business creating a multi-vitamin that was safe for them and others with their condition.

Last year the brothers created Clotamin, a multi-vitamin without vitamin K, manufactured by Global Nutritional Research, a company operated by Justin's wife, Kelly, and started to produce and distribute Clotamin.

The trick for the Barch brothers, who are both on blood thinning drugs, was to keep a constant level of vitamin K in their diet. Having too much or too little of the vitamin, found in leafy green vegetables, in the blood stream can increase the chances of clotting. Vitamin K is also found in every single multi-vitamin on the market, Justin Barch said.



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Justin (left) and Mackie Barch founded a company that makes a multi-vitamin tailored to people with frequent blood clotting problems. The third-generation Kensington residents grew up with a blood clot disorder, but couldn't take a multi-vitamin because of health risks.

"If you keep it on a consistent level, that's fine," he said. "But there are a lot of people who are on blood thinners and just not educated about what they can and can't have."

Clotamin was made available for sale in February and already the first international order was placed on the Barches Web site, www.clotamin.com. Hundreds of orders have been placed in nearly every state.

When they began the business, Justin and Mackie were looking to keep themselves healthy, but have managed to fill a widespread need.

"Really we just wanted to make a multi-vitamin that we could take," said Justin Barch, 29. "We had no expectations or idea that people would go for it."

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Eating too many green vegetables could spike their vitamin K level. Conversely, the level would drop if the brothers took a multi-vitamin with K on a regular basis and forgot one day.

The Barch family first found out about their hereditary blood clot disorder in 1998. A rugby player at University of Colorado at Boulder at the time, Mackie Barch, now 33, went to the hospital for what felt like a groin pull a few days after a car accident.

“They found a clot that totally backed everything up my leg,” he said. “Here I was bed ridden for three weeks. The pain doesn’t get any worse than that.”

Blood samples revealed that Mackie Barch had Factor V Leiden Thrombophilia, a disorder that increases the tendency of blood to clot in veins.

The body begins clotting, or coagulation, in order to heal cuts and stop blood flow. However, blood clots inside the body can lead to serious and life-threatening complications if the clot is in a major artery.

Barch was put on a blood-thinning drug called Heparin and doctors believed that the clot had formed because of the car accident. They were proven wrong when Justin was hospitalized with severe back pain in 2006. Doctors eventually found several large blood clots in his lungs, a condition known as a pulmonary embolism and fatal to 45 percent of people who have one.

“When something like this happens, you have to change everything,” he said. “It really is, for a lot of people we talk to with Factor V, a life-changing event.”

After weeks of intense Heparin therapy, the clots dissolved and Justin was released from the hospital. He was prescribed blood-thinning medication for the rest of his life, and would not be able to take a multi-vitamin that contained vitamin K.

Kelly Barch said the idea for the vitamin came soon after Justin came home from the hospital.

“As soon as we found out about his condition, we researched what kinds of food and exercise he was going to need from now on,” said Kelly Barch, Justin’s wife. “That’s when we came up with the idea for the vitamins.”

The business was started in 2007 and Clotamin has been available through its Web site since February. The family would not disclose the company’s earnings to date.

Kelly Barch now runs the day-to-day operations of the business, including handling e-mails and phone calls that come in on daily from people thanking the family for their product.

“People really open up to you,” she said. “I mean, these are people that are on blood-thinners for rest of their lives. They love to talk about it because there’s something therapeutic about it.”

The brothers echoed her sentiment.

“Really, it’s been great to see this take off but we’re just happy to share it with all these other people,” said Mackie Barch.

For More Information about
Clotamin please visit:
www.clotamin.com