

TECH AND BIOTECH

Tech and Biotech: Madison firm's breath analyzer can tell if you're about to gain weight

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Want to know if you can eat that second piece of cake without putting on the pounds?

[Isomark](#) says it can tell you.

Isomark has been touting its Canary breath analyzer as a way to detect the early onset of infections. The company landed a \$1.7 million federal “fast track” grant to advance the technology last fall, in the wake of the recent Ebola scare.

Now, Isomark CEO Joe Kremer says the non-invasive Canary can do more than just sniff out infections; it can also “smell” if you are about to gain weight.

The device senses changes in the body’s metabolism. Just as it can detect a metabolic shift toward fighting infection, it can also show if your body has an energy surplus, meaning too many calories to burn, or a deficit, meaning too few, Kremer said.

He said the breathalyzer examines carbon isotopes in a person’s breath, before and after exercising. “It can tell ... if you eat some food, are you going to be adding fat or do you need it?” Kremer said.

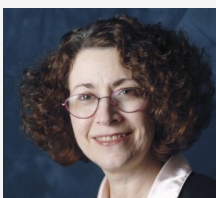
He said he envisions three potential markets: Patients in long-term care who have a feeding tube; people on weight management programs; and athletes trying to bulk up.

Kremer said Isomark is working with the Mayo Clinic to design a study of tube-fed patients. He thinks the Canary will be able to tell if patients receive enough calories.

Isomark, founded in 2005, has three full-time and two part-time employees. A study on the Canary’s infection-detecting capability began this month at UW Hospital and in Florida, Kremer said. He said he hopes to apply in January 2016 for federal approval to market the device for that.

About the Canary’s weight analysis function, chief scientific officer Dan Butz said it is a “vast improvement” over the bathroom scale. “The bathroom scale won’t give you biofeedback on an immediate basis. Our technology can,” he said.

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State Journal business reporter [Judy Newman](#) follows news and trends about the technology and biotechnology sectors in the Madison area.

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