

Reads for Paeds

Epilepsy



This book is meant only to support what a young person and their family have already been told about their condition by a healthcare professional. Do not use this book to replace advice and treatment from a doctor.

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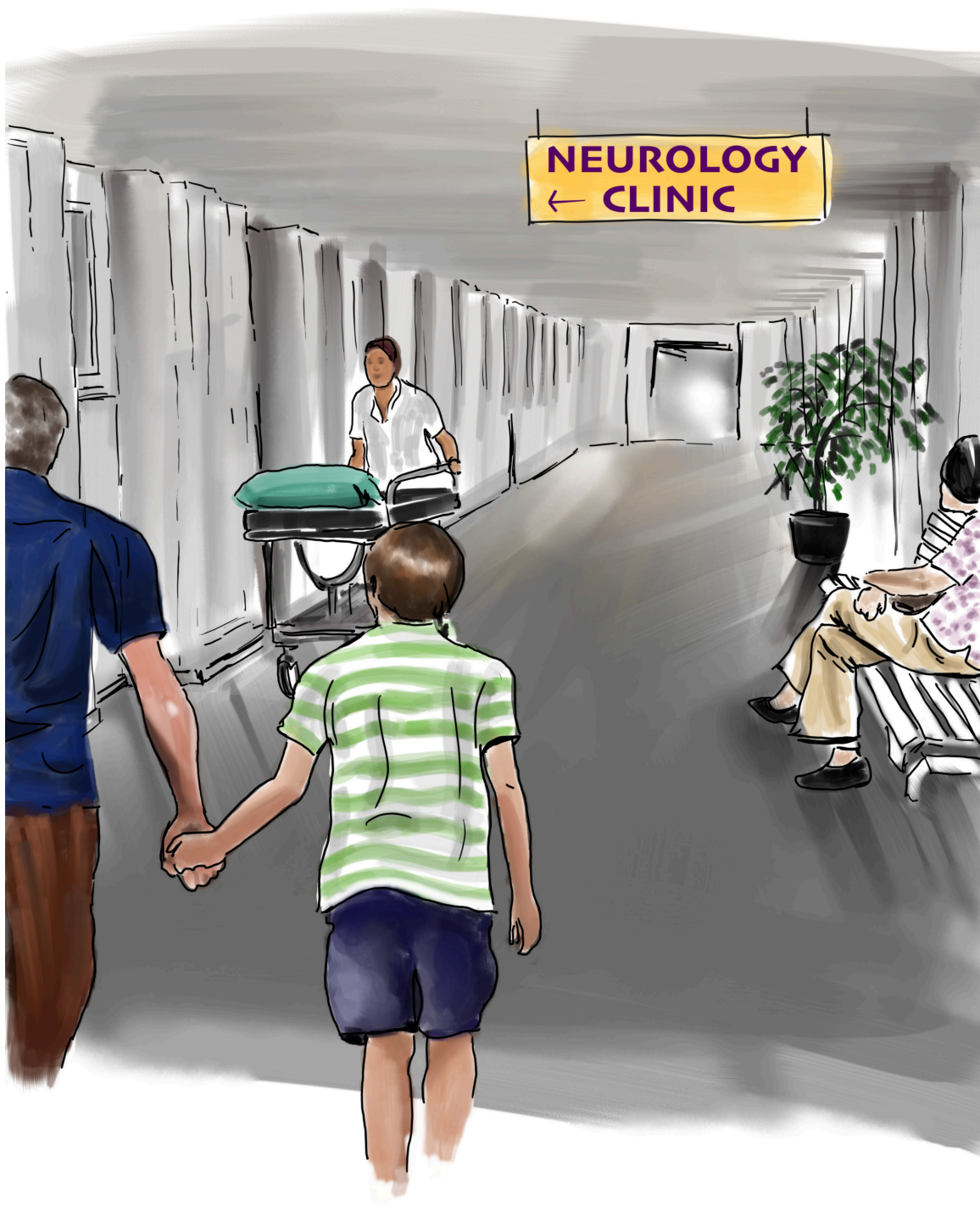
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Noah hurried into the hospital with his mom and dad. Noah had been feeling funny in his head, and his parents were worried that he was having seizures. Today, they have an appointment with the neurologist.

“Mommy, what is a nyoo-ral-uh-jist?” Noah asked.

“A neurologist is a doctor who knows a lot about the brain and how it works,” said his mom.



They entered the doctor's office, and the neurologist introduced herself as Dr. Patel. "Your parents told me that you have had a few seizures, and we think you might have epilepsy. So today we are going to try to understand what is happening."

Noah was worried. He had lots of questions about epilepsy.

"What is epilepsy? How many people have epilepsy? Why do I have epilepsy? Will I have to take medicine? What about school?"

Dr. Patel promised Noah that she would answer all of his questions, but first, she had some questions for him.



Dr. Patel asked Noah to describe his first seizure. “What happened the last time your head felt funny?” she asked.

Noah was confused. “I can’t remember anything,” he replied. “Dr. Patel, why don’t you know what happened to me?” ”



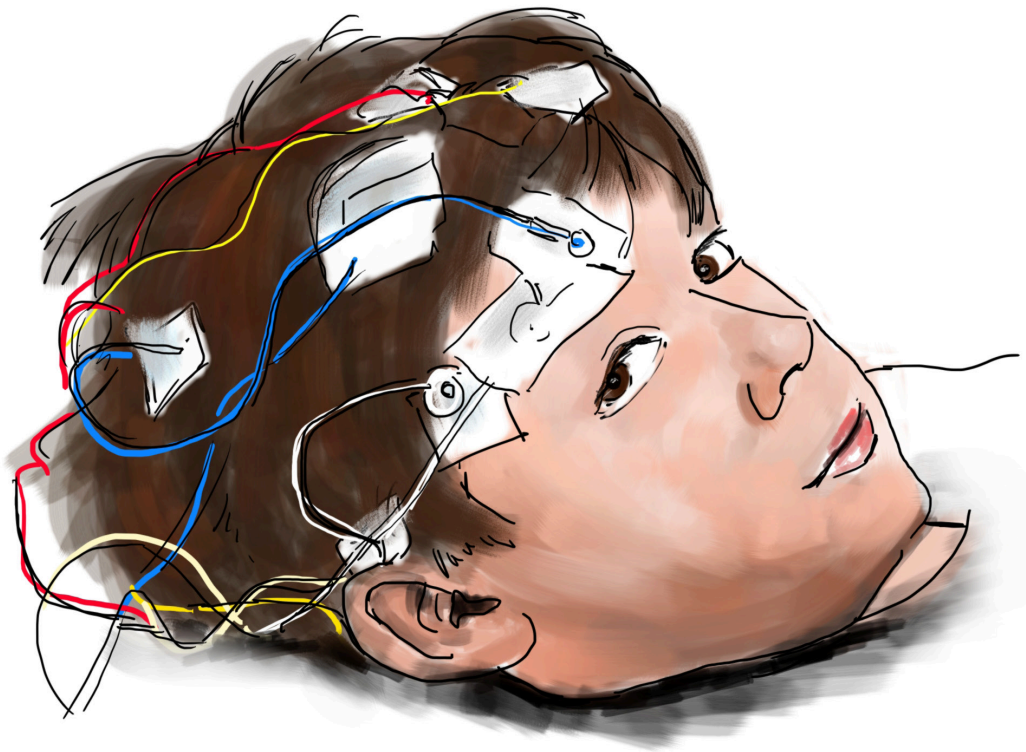
She explained that there are many different types of seizures.

“Some seizures are long, and others only last a few seconds. Some seizures make you go very still, and others make you move very quickly.

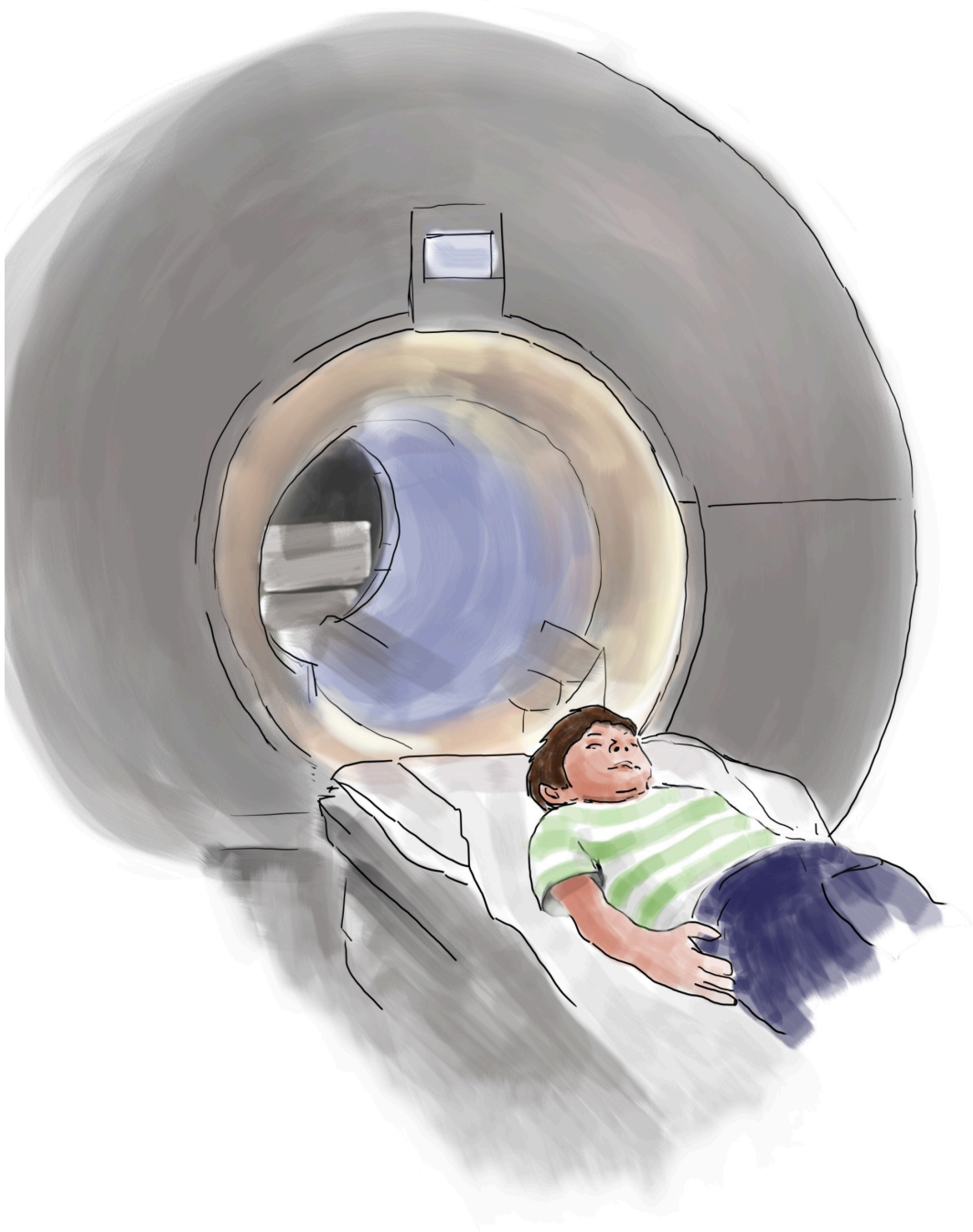
It’s very normal for you to not remember what happened. But if we know more about your seizures, that will help us figure out how to make you feel better.”

Dr. Patel also explained that it is important for Noah to get some tests to learn more about his epilepsy.

“You will need a test called an electroencephalogram (EEG) to measure what’s happening in your brain. This test is not painful and will involve lots of special stickers being put on your head. It allows me to figure out which part of your brain is causing your seizures.”

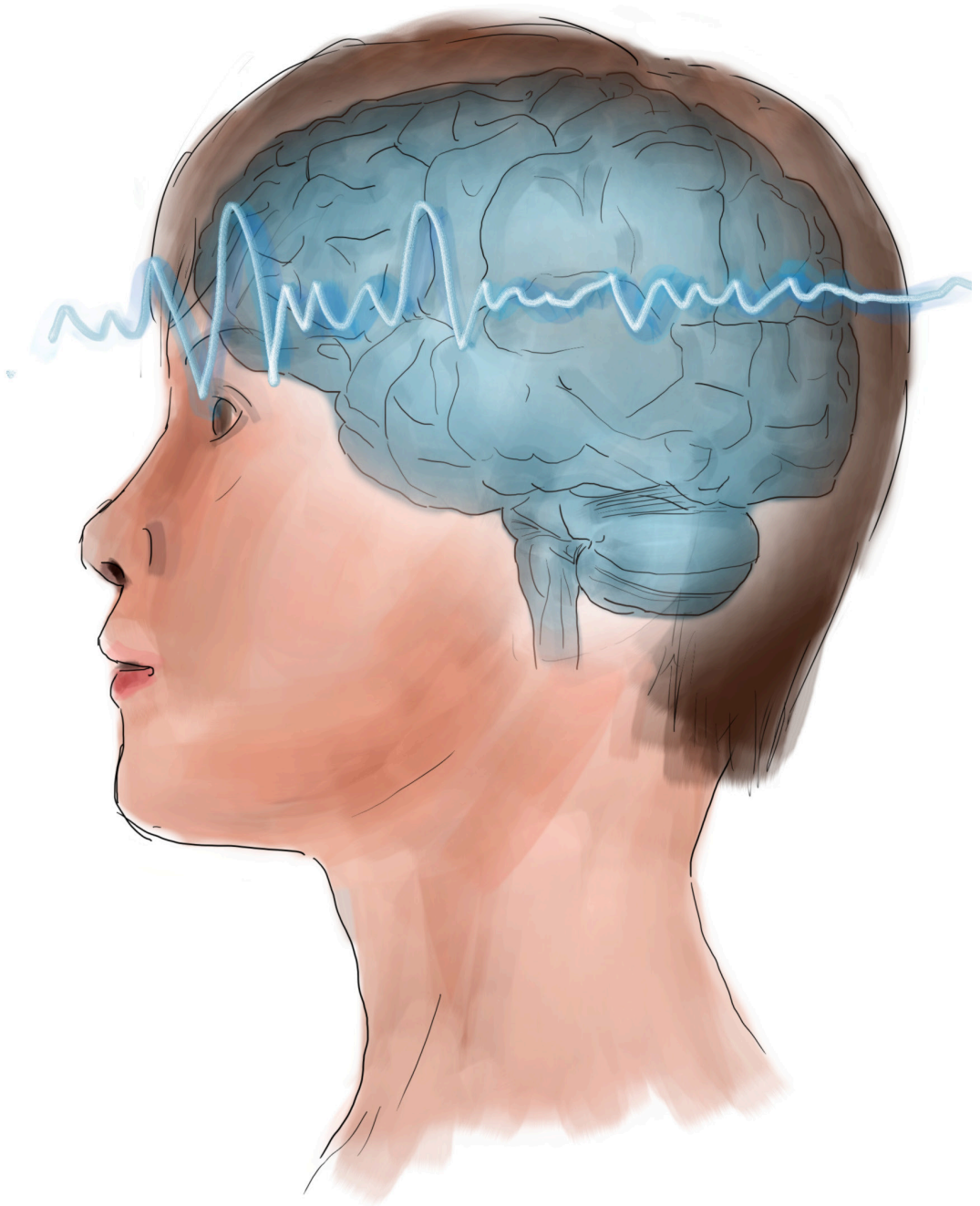


“There are also some tests to see the brain. One of them is called Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), and another is called Computerized Tomographic (CT) scan. These tests won’t hurt. There will just be a big machine taking pictures of what is inside of your head!”



“Is it my turn to ask a question yet?”
exclaimed Noah, “What exactly is epilepsy?”

Dr. Patel apologized, “Sorry, I should have explained that first! Epilepsy is a brain disorder where you have seizures every once in a while. I was actually diagnosed with epilepsy when I was a bit older than you! It’s why I became a neurologist for kids.”

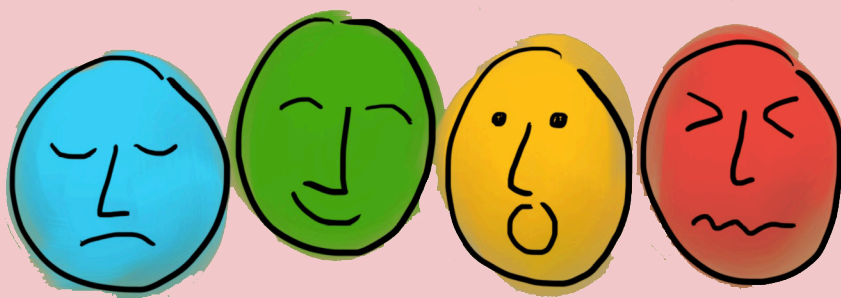


“Do other people in my class have epilepsy too?” wondered Noah.

Dr. Patel responded, “One in a hundred people in Canada have epilepsy. Sometimes, epilepsy can be caused by the brain getting hurt, or problems when the brain was growing. It can also run in your family. In many people, the cause of epilepsy is unknown.”



Dr. Patel continued, "...however, we do know some things that can cause seizures in people with epilepsy. These include being sad, angry, upset, or bored, not getting enough sleep, being sick, not eating well, television, and flashing lights."



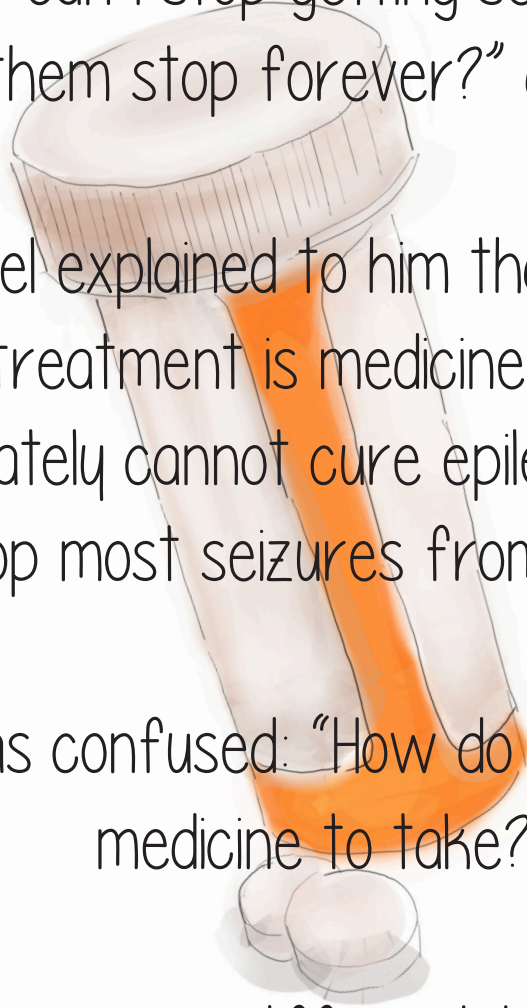
Noah's mom and dad took note of these things, to make sure that they can help Noah avoid them as much as possible.

“So how can I stop getting seizures? Can I make them stop forever?” asked Noah.

Dr. Patel explained to him that the most common treatment is medicine and that they unfortunately cannot cure epilepsy, but they can stop most seizures from happening.

Noah was confused: “How do I know which medicine to take?”

“There are many different types, but we can work with you to find the right one,” explained Dr. Patel.



“Okay, that makes sense, but will I still get to go to school and see my friends?” questioned Noah.

Dr. Patel reassured him, “Of course you can. I have epilepsy, and I was just like everyone else in my class! My teachers were just extra careful and knew what to do if I ever had a seizure.”

“But what will my friends think?” Noah asked nervously.



“Don’t worry! Your parents will talk to your teacher and your teacher can help you explain what epilepsy is to your friends. I’m sure your friends will understand, and you’ll still enjoy school just as much!”

Noah immediately replied, "I do like school a lot! Gym time is my favourite. I love playing sports with my friends, especially basketball."



Dr. Patel was happy to hear that Noah enjoyed playing sports. “Basketball is also my favourite sport and I’ve played since I was a kid, just like you!”

“However,” she explained, “you will have to be careful because some activities can be dangerous for some people with epilepsy. Once we know more about your epilepsy, we can come up with a list of sports that are safe for you.”

“Do you have any more questions for me, Noah?” asked Dr. Patel.

“I’m not sure,” Noah replied. “I learned so many new things about epilepsy today!”

Dr. Patel smiled. “That’s okay! If you think of any new questions, you can always ask me at our next appointment. I’ll be seeing you every few months from now on to see how you’re doing.”

“Okay!” Noah was glad to have Dr. Patel as his doctor, and he knew she would take good care of him.



“Remember, Noah,” said Dr. Patel, “we are all here to help you -- your family, your friends, your teachers, and everyone at the hospital.”



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