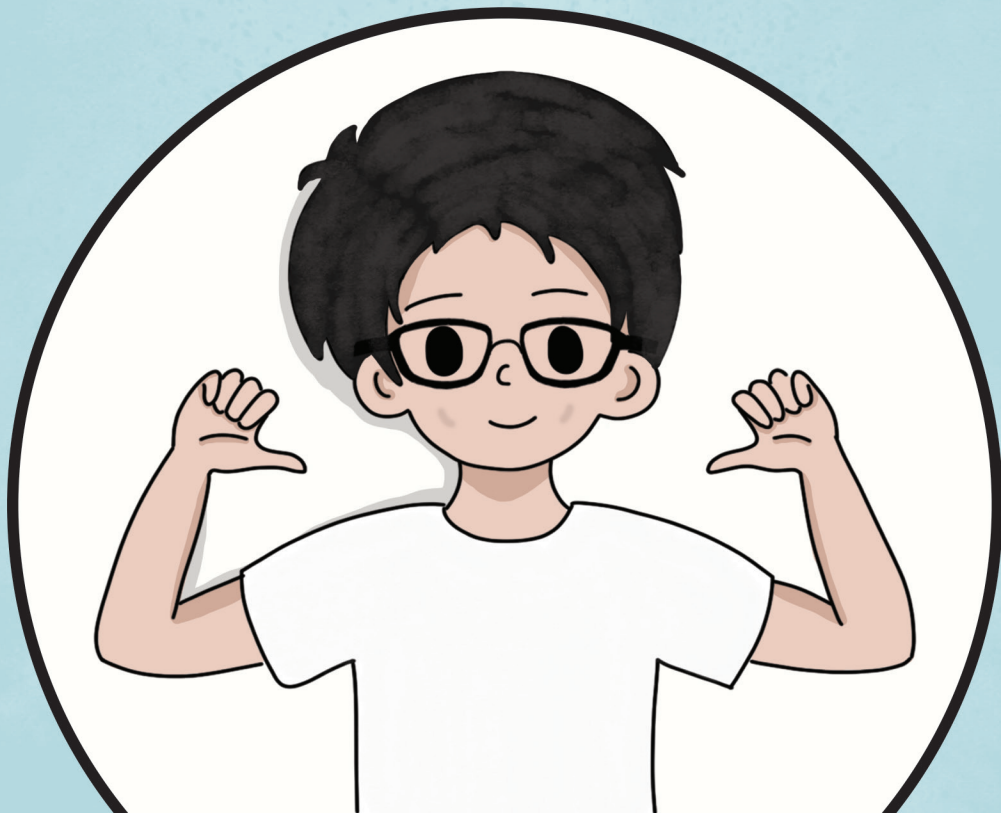


Written by: Jensen Si

Illustrated by: Kendra Ho

MY JIA STORY

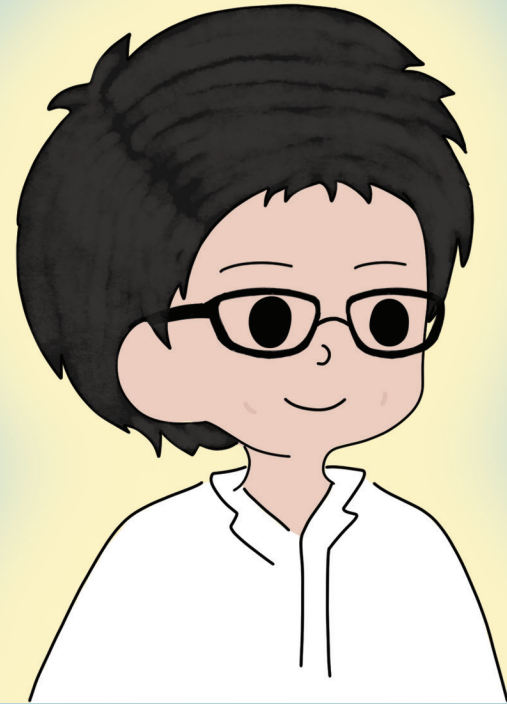


Hi! My name is Jordan, and I have Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA).

Foreword: Jordan's Journey with JIA

Welcome to Jordan's world! He's a fun-loving kid who enjoys playing with friends and going on adventures with his family. But Jordan has Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA), which sometimes makes moving around tough. In this story, you'll see how Jordan learns about JIA and keeps doing what he loves, despite some difficult days. His journey is a reminder that with courage and support, every challenge can be faced with a smile. Let's join Jordan and discover how to live a full, happy life with JIA!

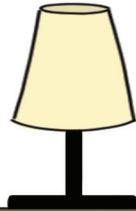
Dr. Ooi Pei Ling
Paediatric Rheumatologist
International Child and Adolescent Clinic
Board Member of National Arthritis Foundation



It all started on that fateful morning when I was 9 years old.

I woke up thinking that it would just be another day of school.

As I got out of bed, I noticed some pain in my right hip.



However, I did not think much of it.

I thought it was because I had been running a lot in school, playing "Tag" with my friends.

In school, I noticed that the pain was going away, and I thought that it was fine.

This went on for about 2 weeks.



One morning, the pain was back and much worse.

By this time, I did not want to walk and could barely move my leg as it felt like it was stuck and was extremely painful if I did.

I immediately shouted for my parents. As I described what kind of symptoms I was experiencing, they grew more and more worried.

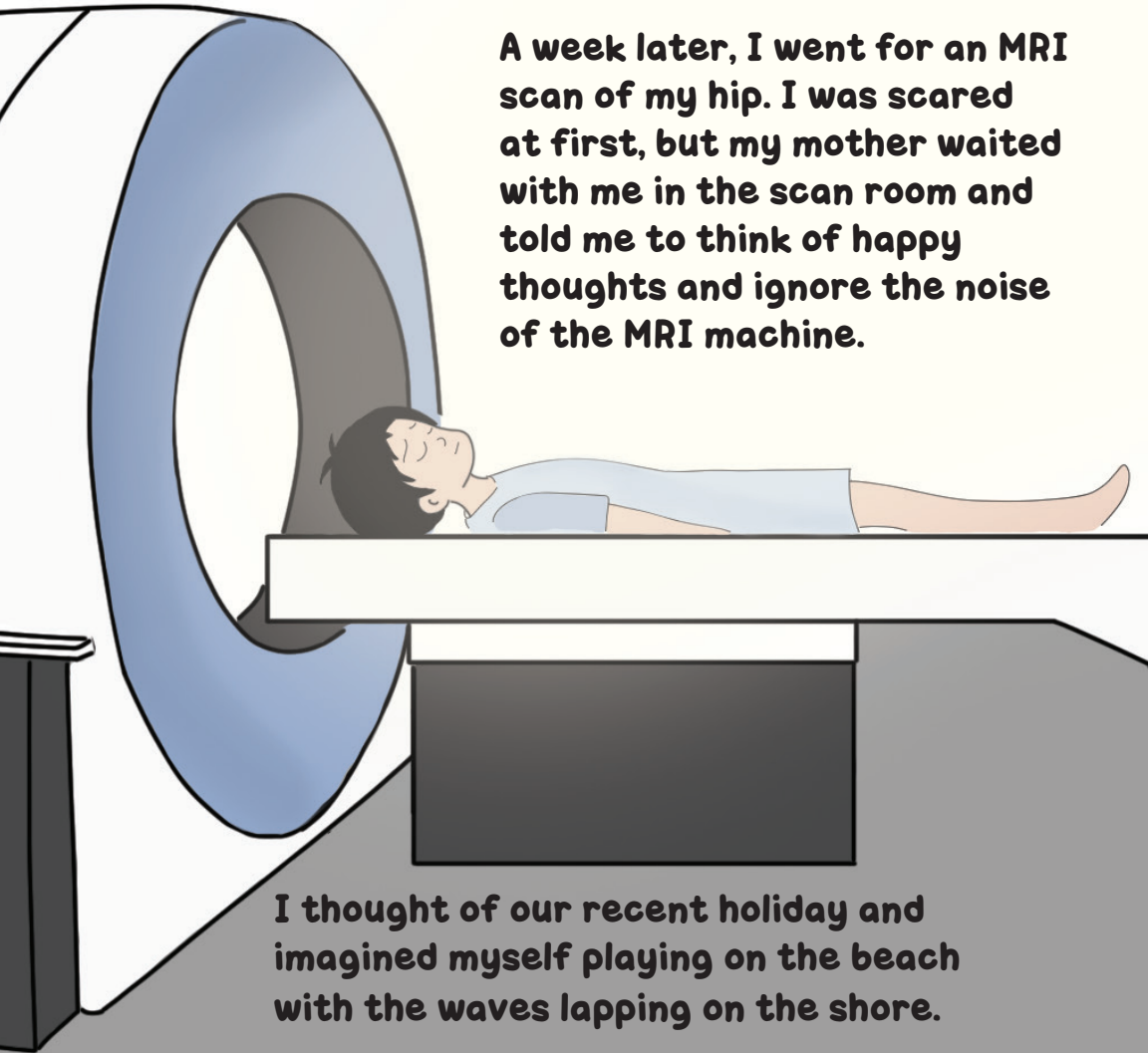


They quickly brought me to see a Paediatrician. She examined me and found that the pain was coming from my right hip.



She told me that I would need some blood tests and scans of my hip.

She also gave me some painkillers to take. The painkillers helped with the pain, but my right hip still felt very stiff.

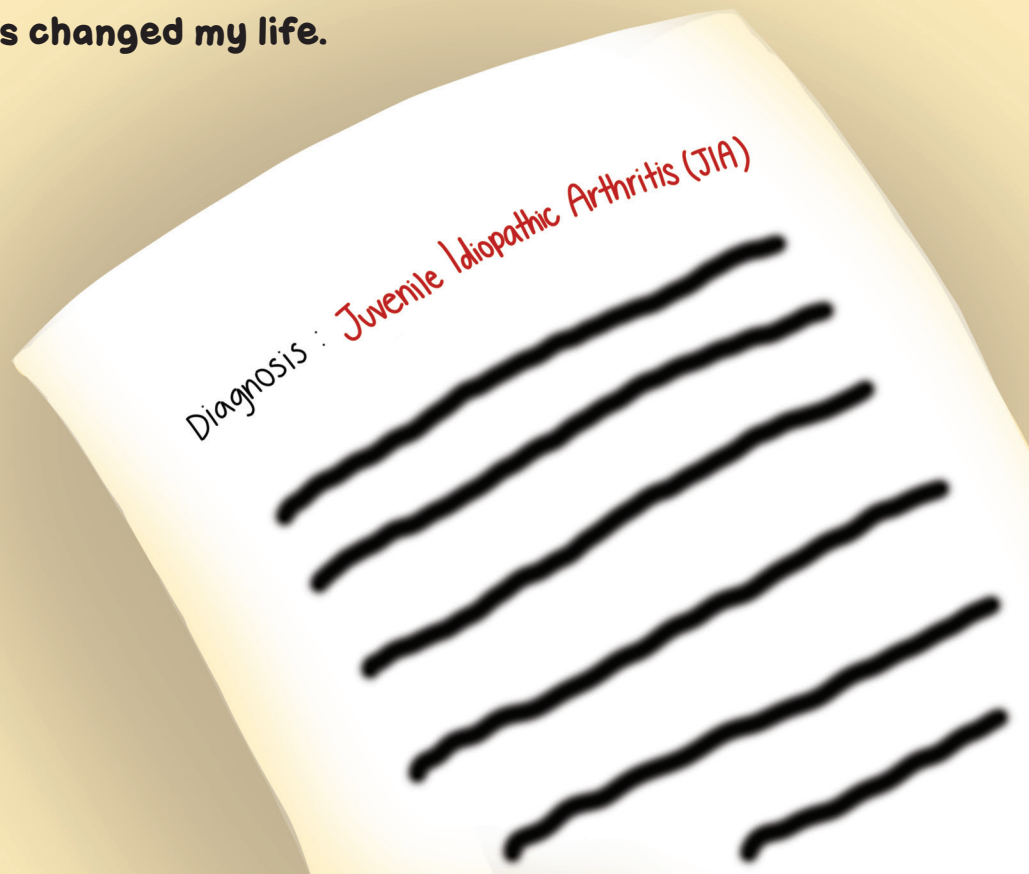


A week later, I went for an MRI scan of my hip. I was scared at first, but my mother waited with me in the scan room and told me to think of happy thoughts and ignore the noise of the MRI machine.

I thought of our recent holiday and imagined myself playing on the beach with the waves lapping on the shore.

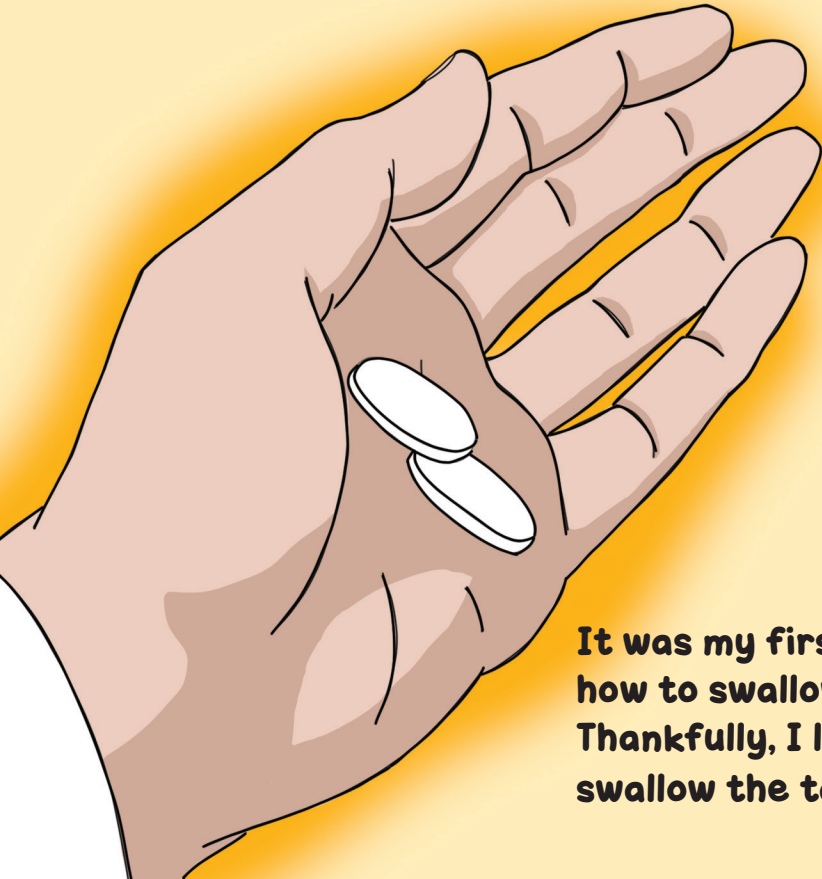
When the MRI scan and blood test results came back, my doctor told me that I had a condition known as JIA, juvenile idiopathic arthritis.

This changed my life.

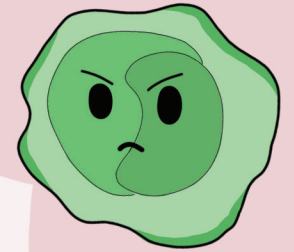
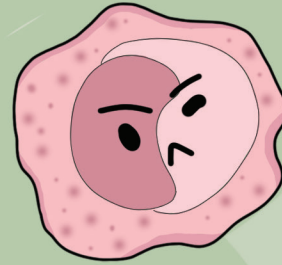


Diagnosis : *Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA)*

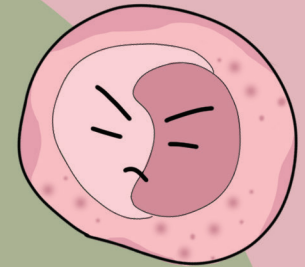
I was started on another different painkiller, an anti-inflammatory tablet, to reduce the pain and stiffness in my right hip.



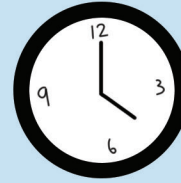
It was my first time learning how to swallow tablets. Thankfully, I learnt how to swallow the tablet quickly!



JIA happens when immune cells in your body think that a certain part of your body (in JIA, the joints) is an enemy. The immune cells then start to attack any joint in the body, causing pain and stiffness in them.



The pain in my right hip got better with the anti-inflammatory tablet and I could play with my friends in school again!

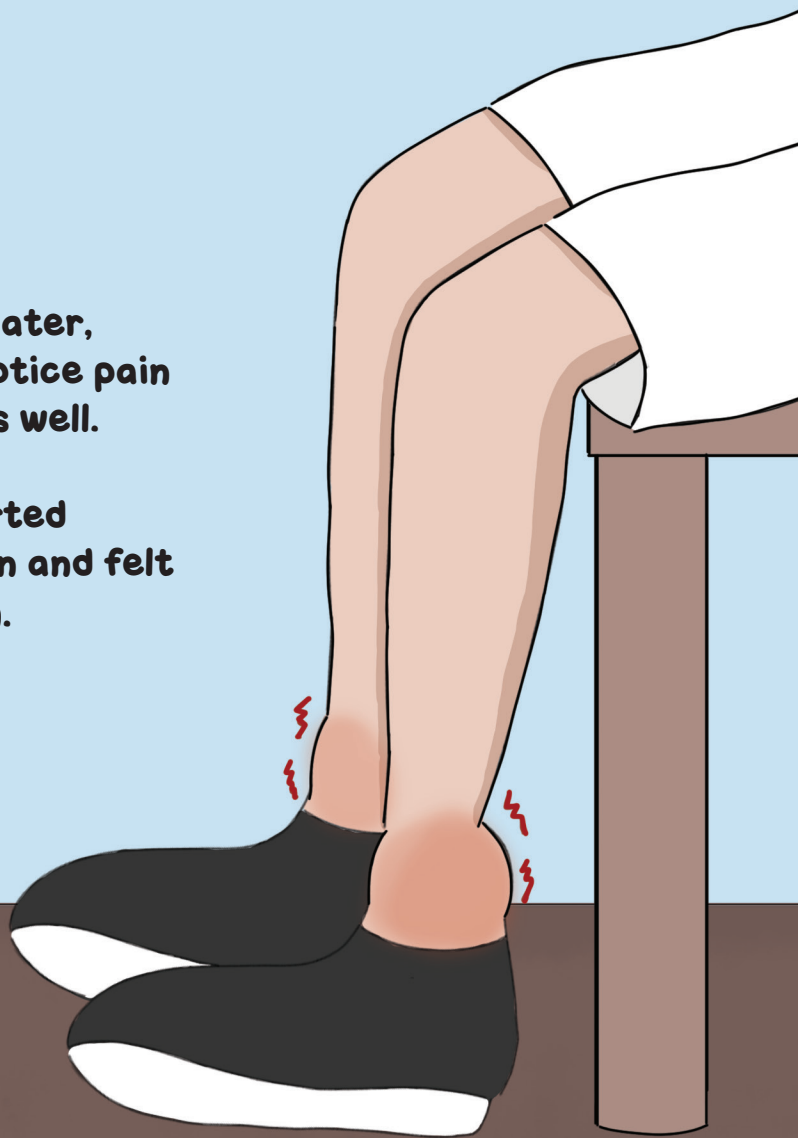


The doctor also advised that I see a physiotherapist to learn some exercises to strengthen my muscles and increase my flexibility.



**A few months later,
I started to notice pain
in my ankles as well.**

**My ankles started
getting swollen and felt
warm to touch.**



I immediately told my mother.

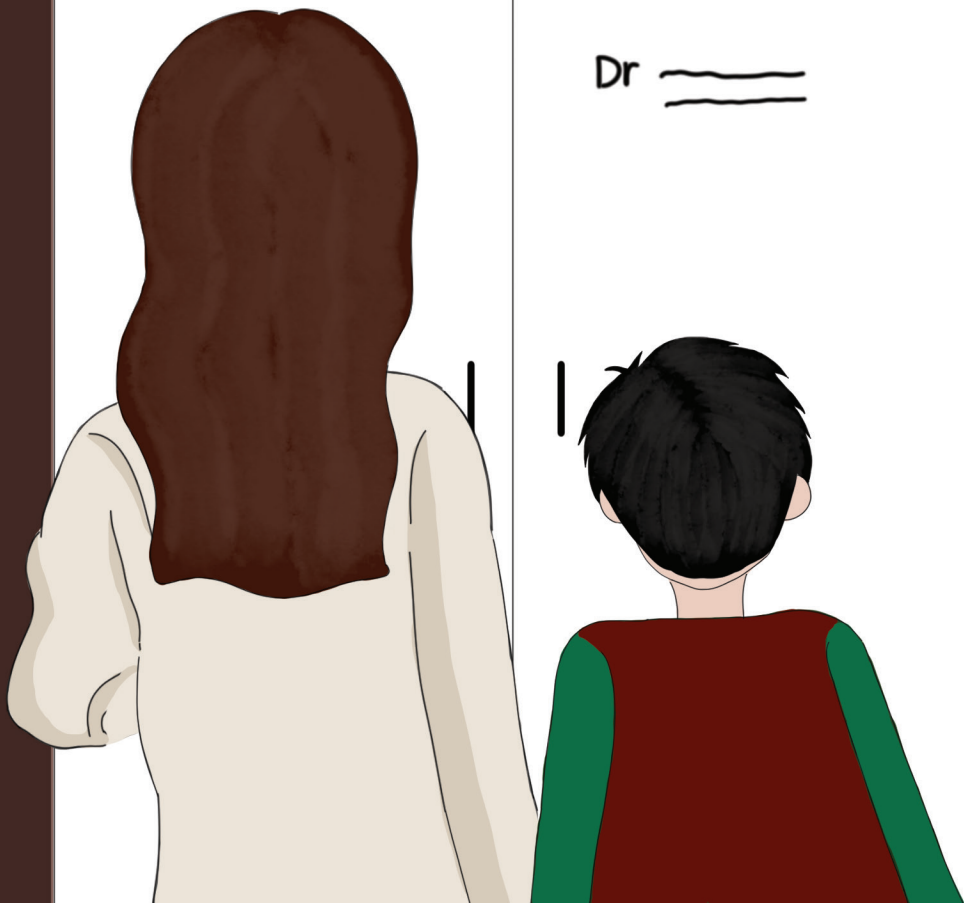
**After calling the doctor, she
said that I should continue
taking the anti-inflammatory
medicine and rest my ankles.**



**However, the pain
did not go away
even after a week.**



My mother decided to bring me to the doctor.



Dr

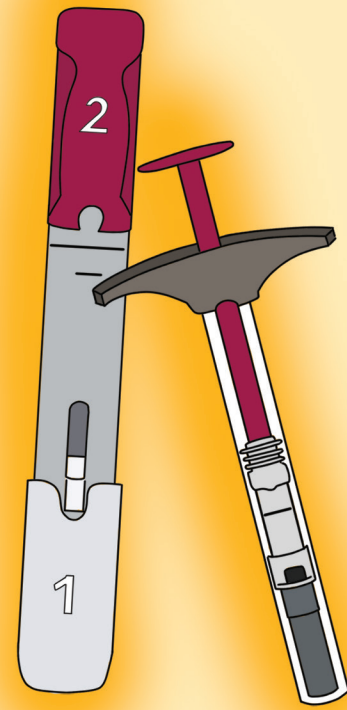
The doctor found that my ankles were very stiff and told my parents that she had to inject both my ankles with a steroid medicine that would reduce the pain and stiffness.



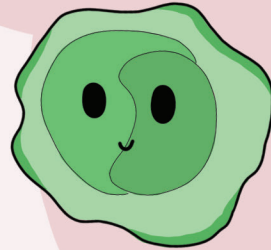
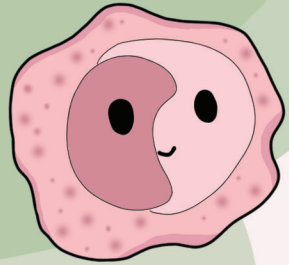
I was very scared but I knew that if I wanted to get better, I had to receive the injection. I held on to my mothers' hands while the doctor injected my ankles. Although the injections were painful, I knew I had to be brave if I wanted to get better.



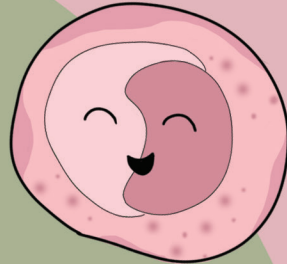
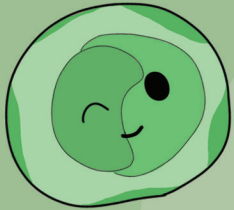
After the injections, my ankles were better.



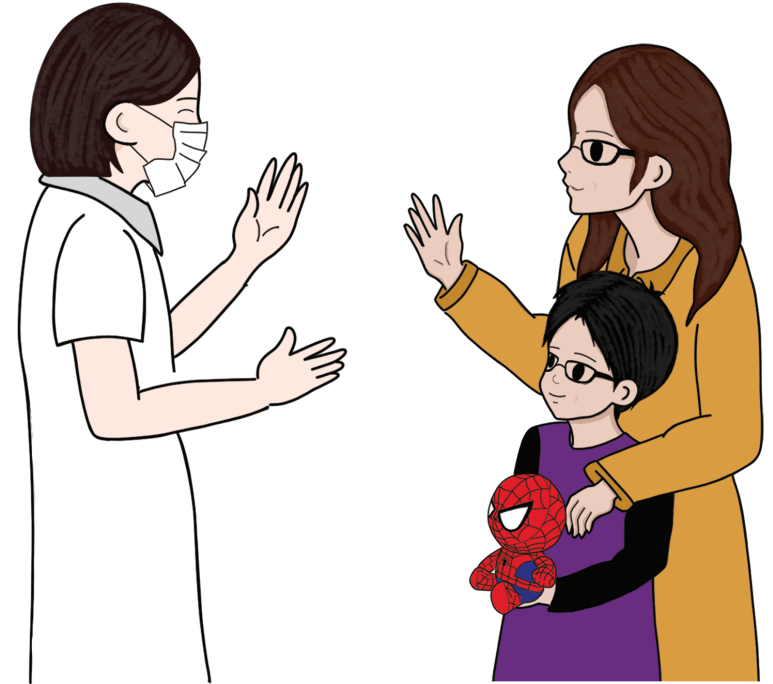
Unfortunately, the doctor said that to control the inflammation, I needed to add on a different medicine, an injection into my thigh or tummy every two weeks.




The injection acts on my immune system, so that my immune cells would not attack my hip, ankles or any other joint.



To start on the injection, my mother and I went to the hospital and a very kind nurse taught my mother and I how to inject the medicine in the correct way.

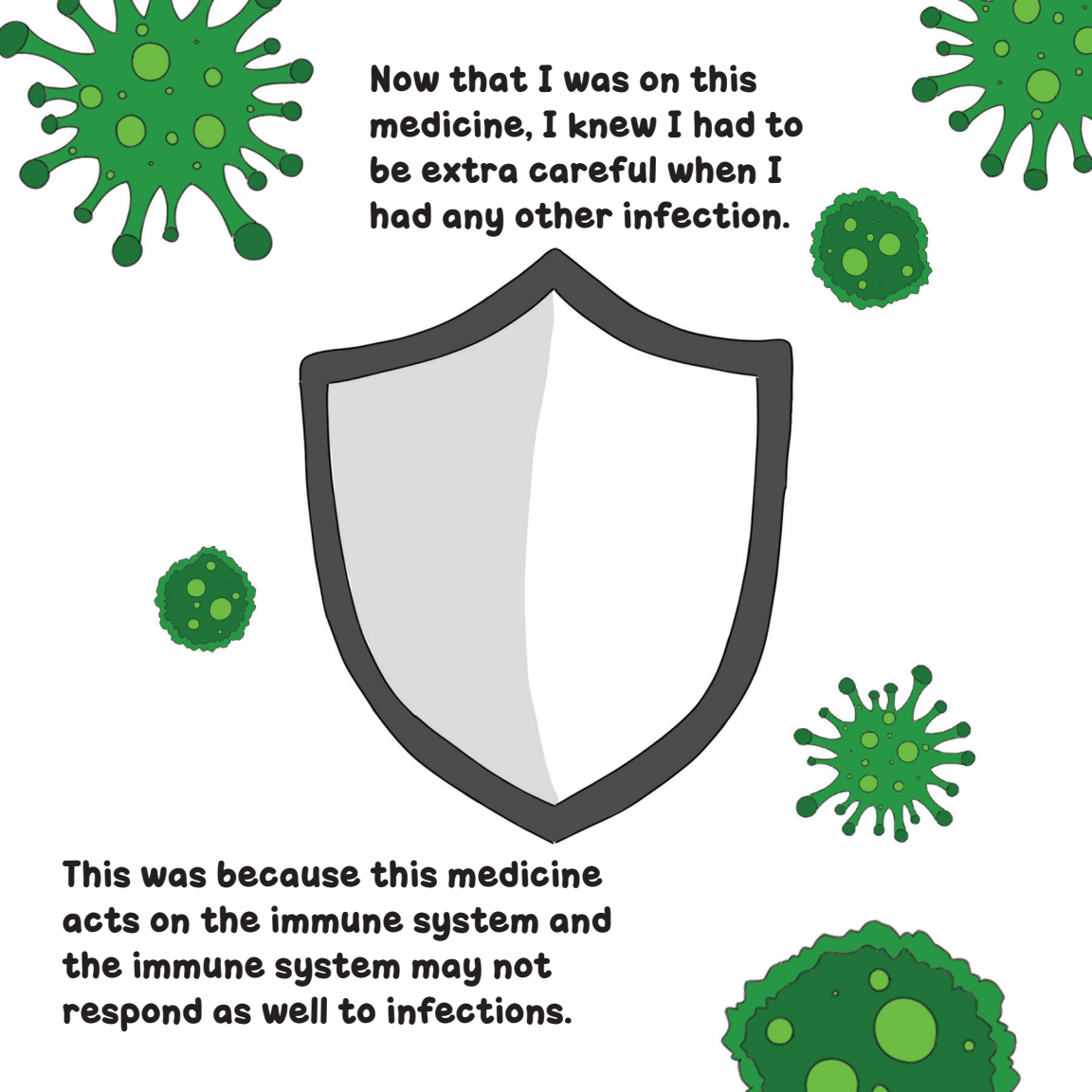


She taught me to use a cold pack to reduce the pain before the injection. She even gave me a Spiderman toy for being brave and not crying at all!

An illustration of a young boy with black hair and glasses, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, dark blue shorts, white socks, and black shoes. He is carrying a black backpack and is climbing a set of white stairs. A thick brown handrail runs along the stairs. The background is a plain light yellow color.

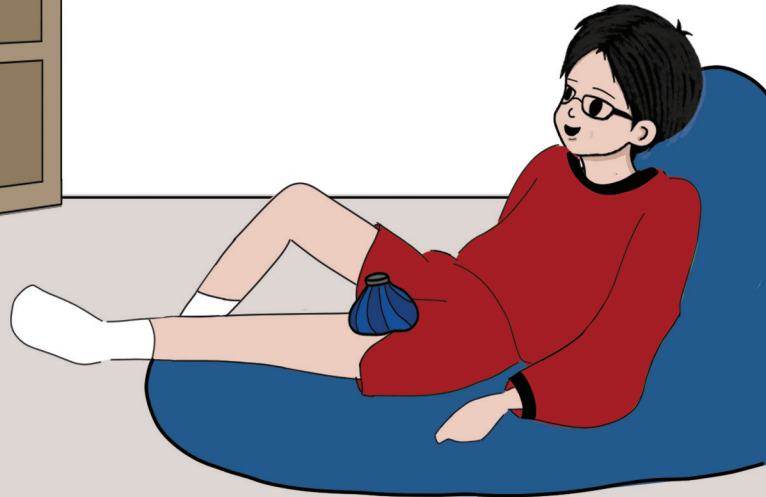
Now that I was on this medicine, I knew I had to be extra careful when I had any other infection.

The injections certainly helped, and I was able to do everything I used to do. I could take the stairs in school and play sports again!

A large, white shield with a thick grey border is positioned in the center-left of the image. Surrounding the shield are several green, spiky virus-like particles of various sizes. Some are spherical with small protrusions, while others are more complex with multiple spikes.

This was because this medicine acts on the immune system and the immune system may not respond as well to infections.

Now, I have a routine before I receive the injection every 2 weeks; I watch my favourite TV show, put on the ice pack where the injection will be and then, my mother will inject the medicine. This helps to take the pain of the injection away.

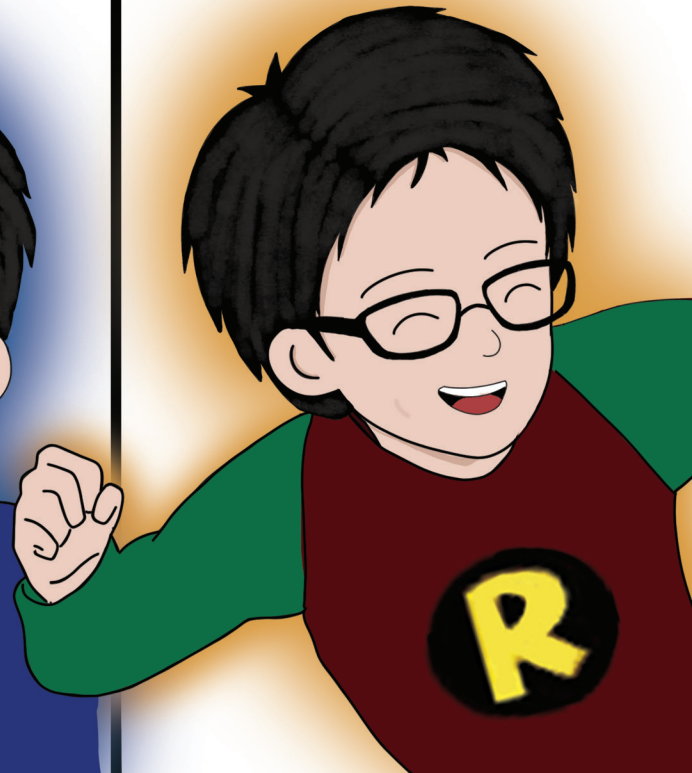


I have bad days of course when the injection hurts!

But the good thing is, it doesn't last long, and the pain goes away.



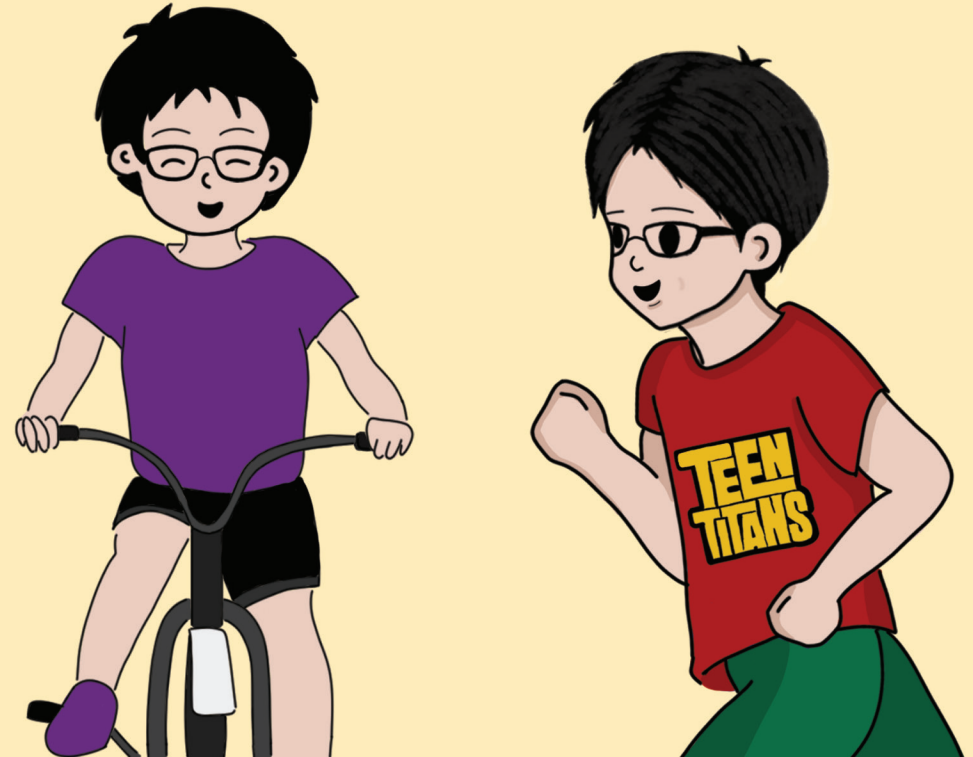
Most importantly, I know it is helping to keep the inflammation in my joints away, so that I can run and play with my friends.



When I went back to the doctor to have a check-up, she said that I was doing well on the injections and that I could reduce my medications. Yipee!!



So, here I am now. Able to run, walk, jump and play like any other kid my age. At my school camp, I joined in all the activities without even thinking twice!





Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis is serious, but I know I will need to be brave to overcome whatever challenges come my way.

Tell your parents immediately if you notice any pain or stiffness in your joints, especially in the morning.

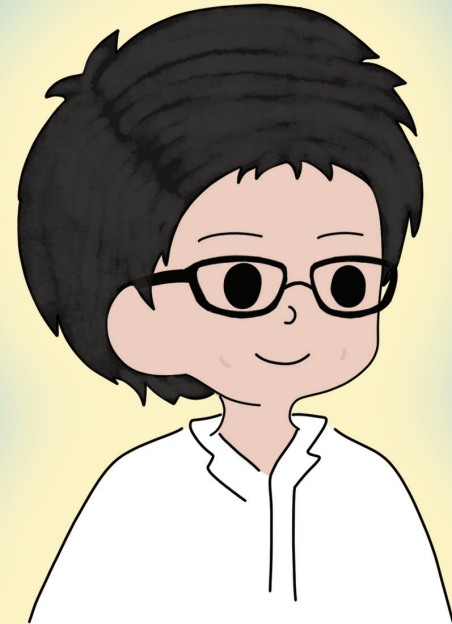
Eat healthily. And most importantly, play, be happy and don't forget the physiotherapy exercises.





Having arthritis is uncomfortable, but it's all about persevering and getting back up no matter how many times you're knocked down.

**Do not be scared of your treatment.
The treatment will make the pain go away and
you will get better eventually.**



Stay positive and never give up!

Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis:

Understanding and Managing the Condition

Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) is a condition in children that causes joint pain, swelling, and stiffness. Understanding JIA and how it's treated can help children and families manage it more effectively.

What is JIA?

JIA happens when the immune system, which usually fights off germs, mistakenly attacks the joints. This leads to symptoms like sore, stiff, and swollen joints, often more noticeable in the morning.

Diagnosing JIA

Doctors diagnose JIA through a combination of physical exams, blood tests, and imaging like ultrasound or MRI scans. This process can be tough and lengthy, but it's crucial for finding the best way to treat the condition.

Support for Kids with JIA

Having JIA can be challenging, but kids don't have to face it alone. Support from doctors, nurses, family, and friends is important. It helps kids stick with their treatment and stay positive about their daily activities.

In summary, while JIA is a complex condition, understanding its nature, getting the right treatment, and having a good support system are key to managing it. With proper care, children with JIA can lead active lives.

Treatment of JIA

Treatment for JIA varies based on each child's needs. The main goals are to reduce pain, control swelling, and keep joints working well. Here are some common treatment methods:

- 1. Medication:** This includes anti-inflammatory drugs and medications that suppress their over-active immune system. Some children might need stronger medicines called biologics, which target specific parts of the immune system.
- 2. Physical Therapy:** Regular exercises and therapy help keep joints flexible and strong. This is key to maintaining mobility and reducing discomfort.
- 3. Steroid Injections:** For severe joint swelling, steroids can be injected directly into the joint to bring down the inflammation quickly.
- 4. Regular Check-ups:** Regular visits to the doctor are important to track how well the treatment is working and make changes if needed.
- 5. Healthy Lifestyle:** A balanced diet and staying active are important. Sometimes, special exercises or activities are recommended to keep the joints moving without causing more pain.

GLOSSARY

Symptoms – a physical or mental feeling that a person experiences that may indicate a disease or condition

Paediatrician – a medical doctor specialising in children and their diseases/ medical conditions. In the case of JIA, a Paediatric Rheumatologist is someone who specialises in arthritis and immune-related conditions.

Painkillers – this is a type of medicine that relieves pain. It can include simple medications like Paracetamol and anti-inflammatory medications.

MRI scan – Magnetic Resonance Imaging scan uses magnetic fields and radiowaves to create detailed images of a certain part of the body.

Anti-inflammatory – a drug that reduces inflammation (pain, redness and swelling) in the body.

Physiotherapist – also known as physical therapist is a person that works with patients to help them manage their balance, mobility and motor function through physical therapy exercises.

Injection – the act of putting a drug into a person's body using a syringe and needle

Immune system - this is the body's defence response against injury, infection or disease.

Inflammation - a response triggered by damage to a certain part of the body. It is usually the body's natural response to protect itself against harm or injury. The area of inflammation is usually red, hot, painful and swollen.

Infection – this refers to the invasion of the body by harmful organisms that can cause diseases.

Stiffness – inability to move easily without pain

Persevere – continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failures or challenges.

Join Jordan in his journey as he discovers that he is diagnosed with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA). This book hopes to inspire kids with JIA, to know that they can overcome all challenges with a brave heart and a positive mindset!

**Wish to learn more about Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA)
or other arthritis conditions?**

**Find out more about our educational talks and programmes
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