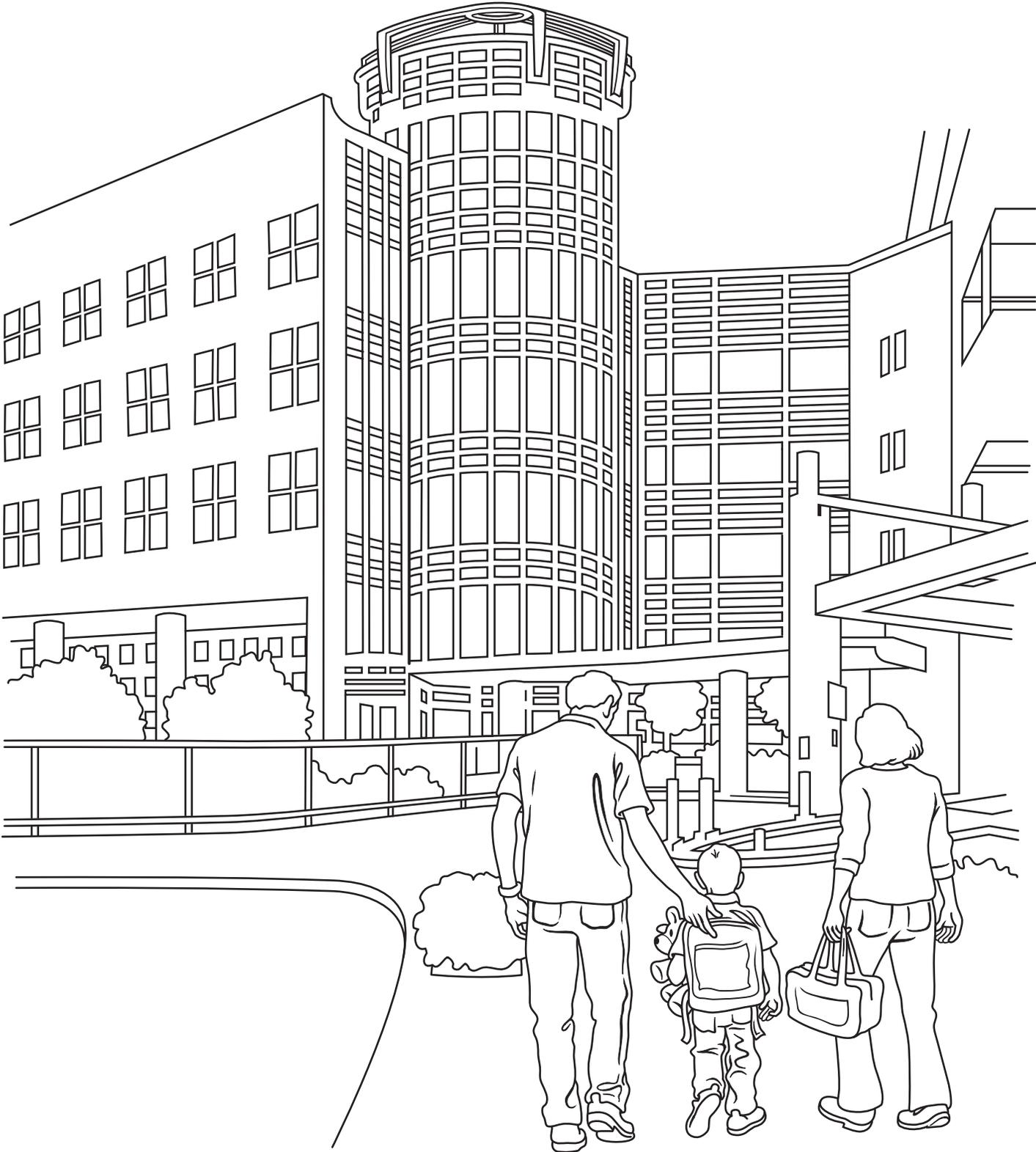


# My Surgery at Duke Children's Hospital



**Written by: Duke Child and Adolescent Life Program**  
**Illustrated by: Jim Brown, 2021**

DUHS Patient Education Governance Council approved 6/2021  
"My Surgery at Duke Children's Hospital"

Developed and approved specifically for DUHS patients and loved ones  
Not intended for distribution or use by individuals outside of Duke Health

## Message to Caregivers

Dear grown-ups,

This coloring book is designed to provide information on what to expect during your child's surgery at Duke Children's Hospital and Health System. Coming to the hospital for surgery can be stressful for you and your child. A bit of planning can make the experience more positive for you both!

As you read together, you can give simple explanations about why your child needs a surgery or other details regarding their specific medical condition. Answer questions honestly. For example, will your child go home following surgery or need to stay in the hospital? Will your child have a cast or bandage when they wake up? Use words or examples that your child can understand.

If your child asks a question you are unable to answer or you would like more information specific to your child's surgery, please reach out to your surgeon's office, or the following:

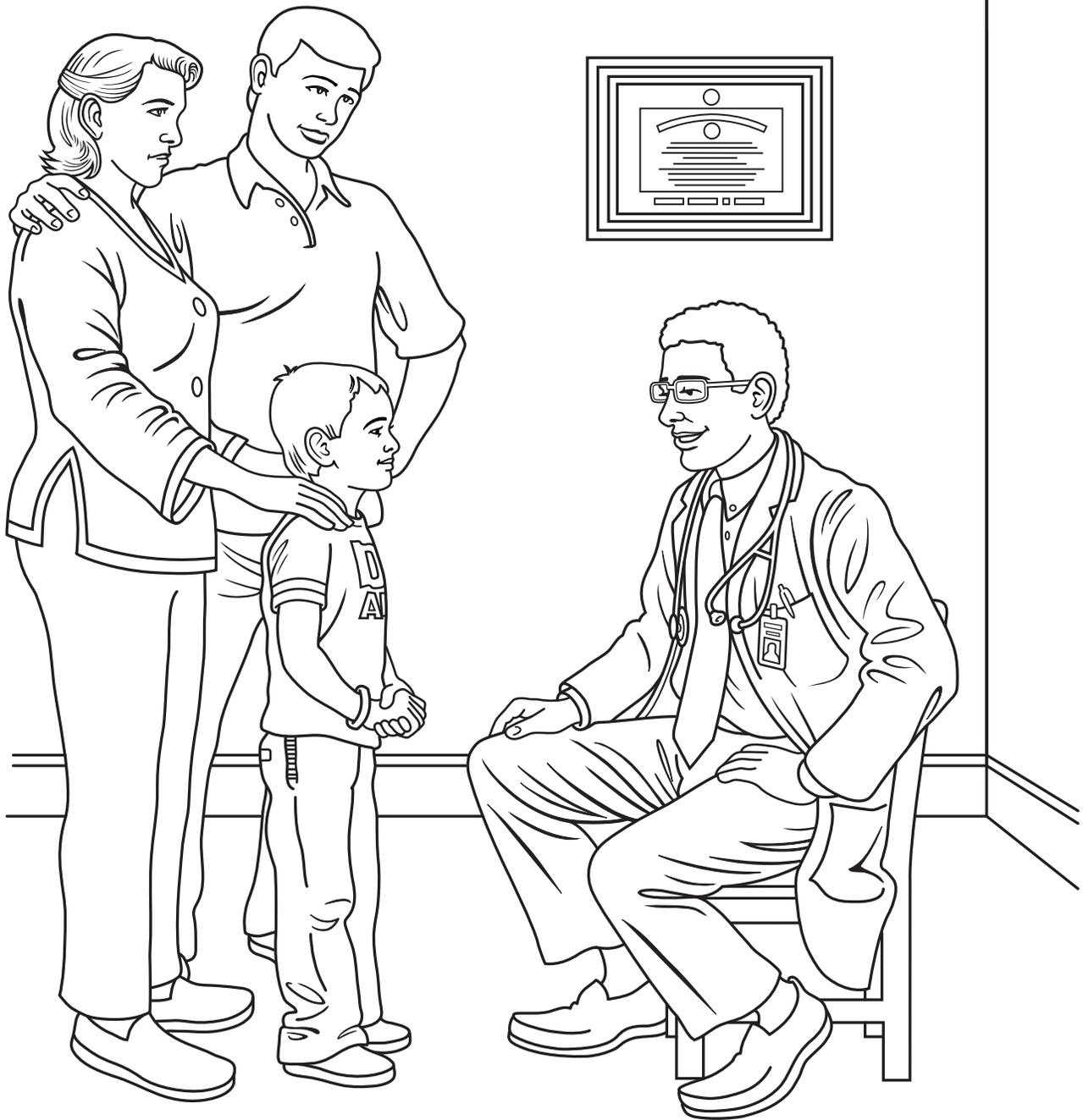
Pre/Post-Surgical Child Life Specialist:  
919-668-4205  
Child\_Life\_Surgery@Duke.edu

You can also read more on how to prepare your child on our website at:  
[www.dukehealth.org](http://www.dukehealth.org)

We look forward to working with you and your child.  
Sincerely,

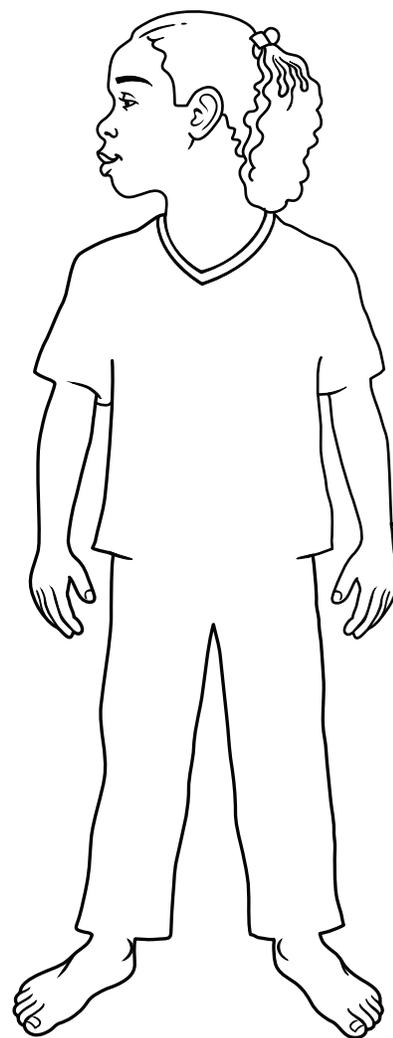
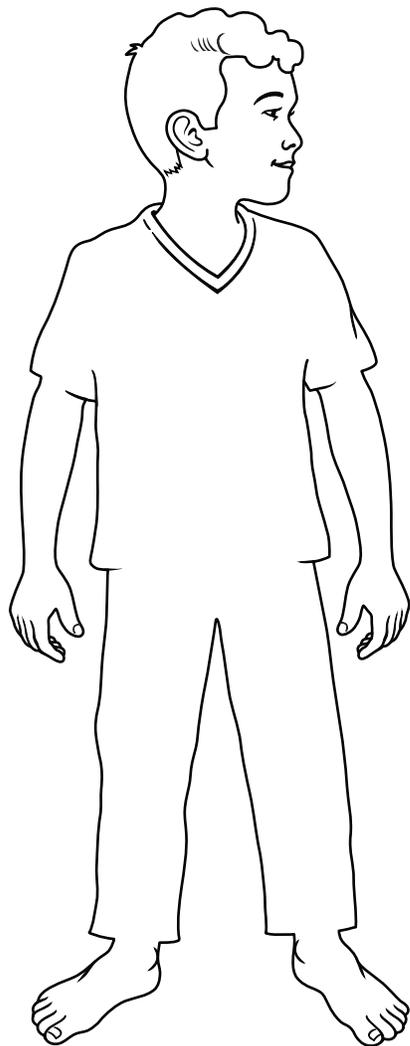
Pediatric Pre-Operative and Post-Surgical Staff

**At a doctor appointment, you might have heard that you needed a procedure or surgery. The word surgery means you will get medicine to be asleep while your doctor checks your body or helps your body get stronger or work in a different way.**



**Surgeries happen at a hospital where you can be safe and comfortable. Some kids feel excited, nervous or worried before their surgery. How are you feeling?**

There are different kinds of surgeries for different parts of your body. Draw a circle around the part of your body that your doctor is working on.

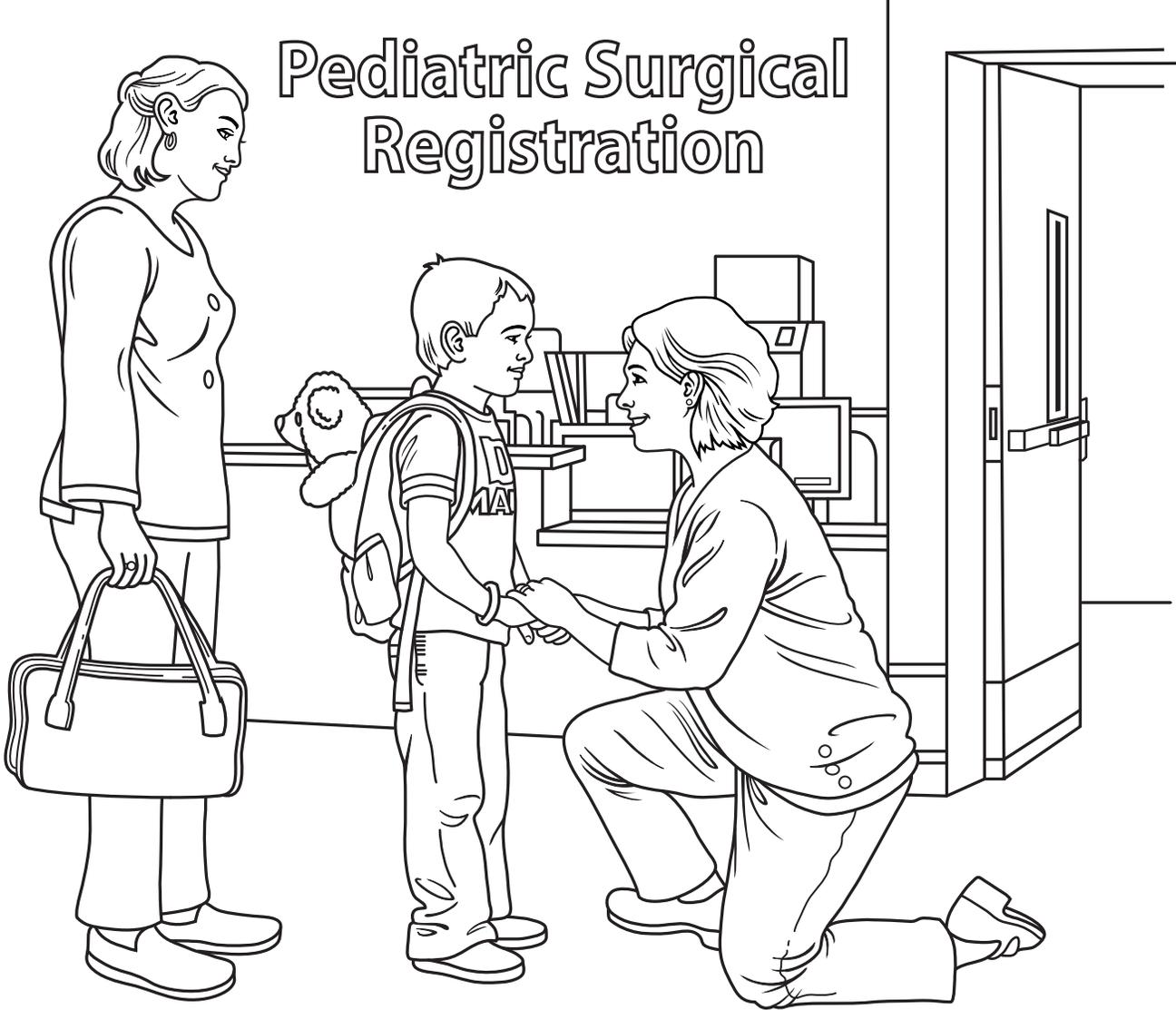


"I'm having a surgery to take out my tonsils so I can breathe better"

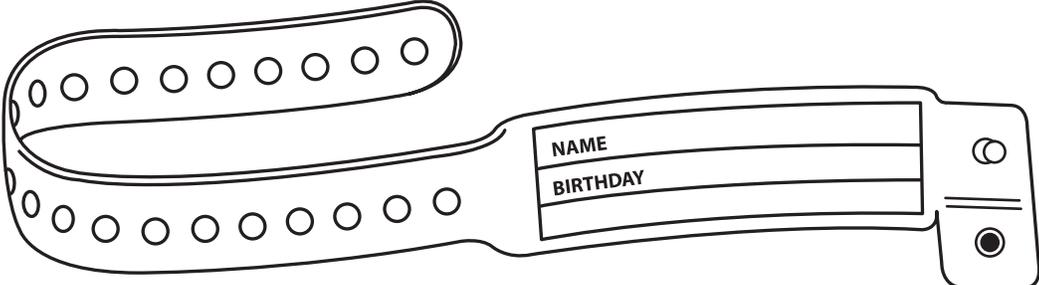
"I'm having a surgery on my leg to help me walk better"



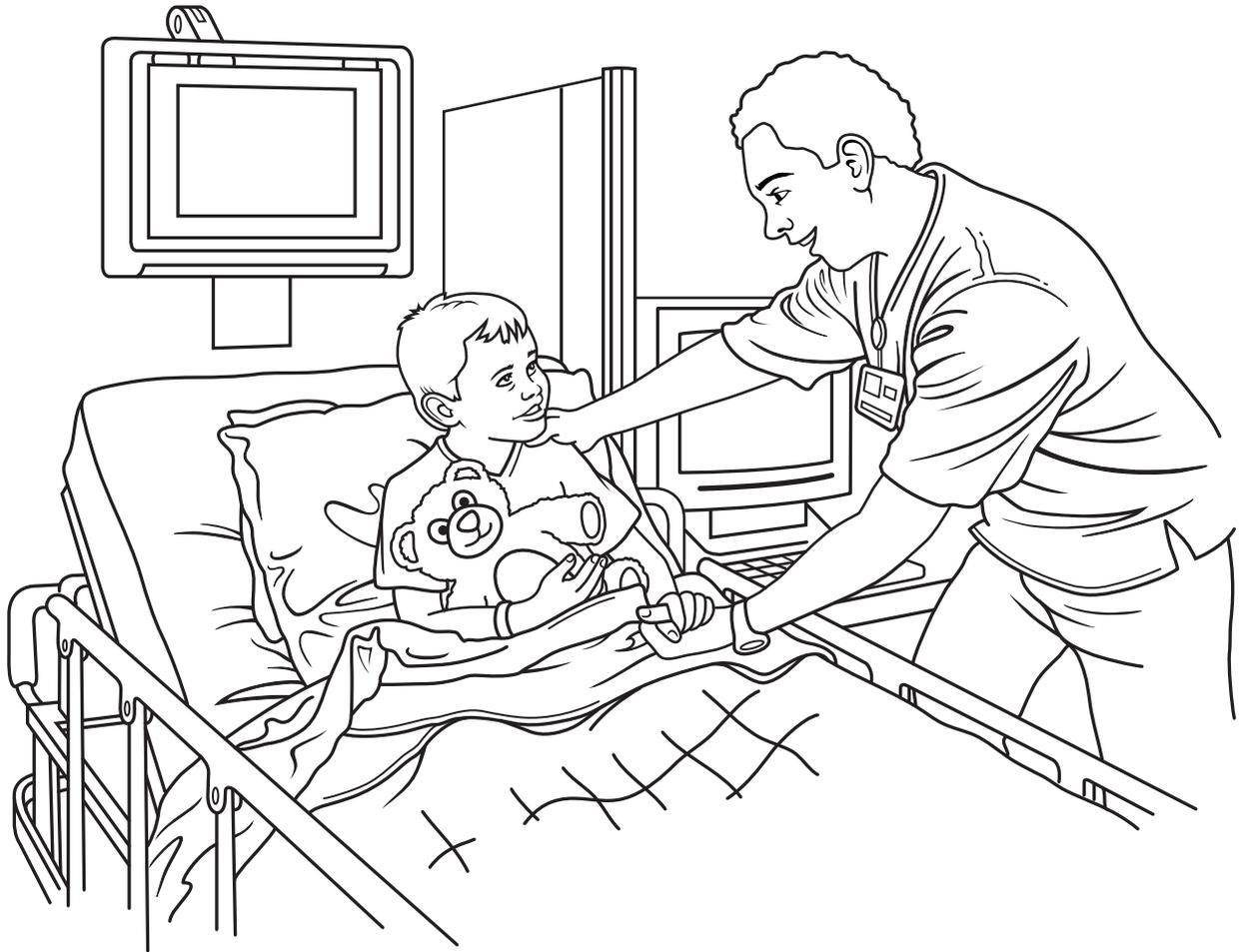
On the day of your surgery, you will check in at the waiting room.  
The receptionist will give you a bracelet to wear with your  
name and birthday.



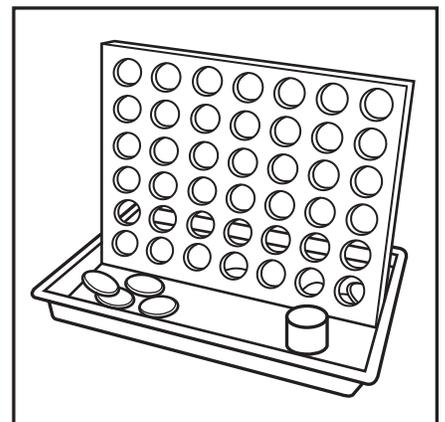
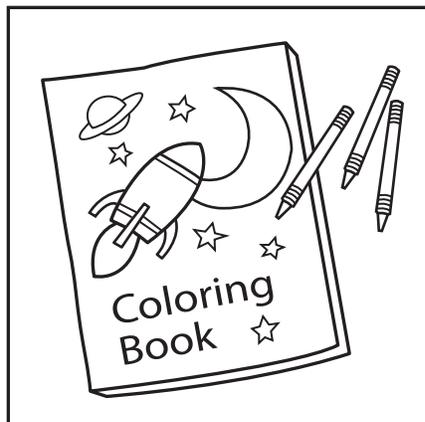
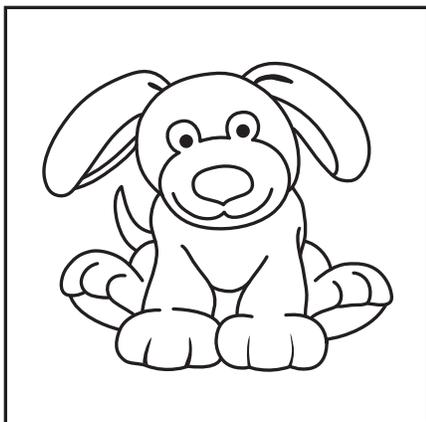
Can you color your bracelet?



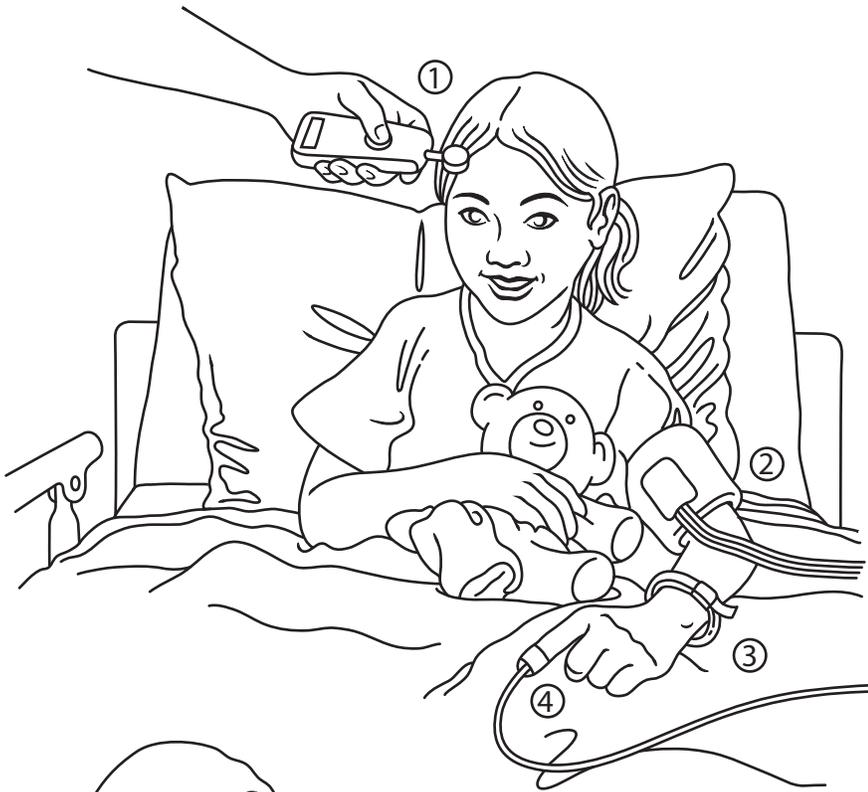
Next, a nurse will bring you to a room to change into hospital pajamas. Your grown-up will go with you and make sure you are comfortable.



You can bring a stuffed animal, blanket, or small toy from home to help you relax. What would you like to bring to the hospital?



**Your nurse will ask you and your grown-up some questions.  
Do you know some of the tools they might also use to see how your  
body is working?**



**1. Thermometer :**

Tickle across your forehead to measure your temperature

**2. Blood Pressure Cuff :**

A tight squeeze on your arm to measure your blood pressure

**3. Wrist Band**

A bracelet with your name and birthday

**4. Pulse Oximeter :**

Sticker wrapped around your finger like a bandaid to measure your heartbeat and oxygen in your body

**5. Stethoscope :**

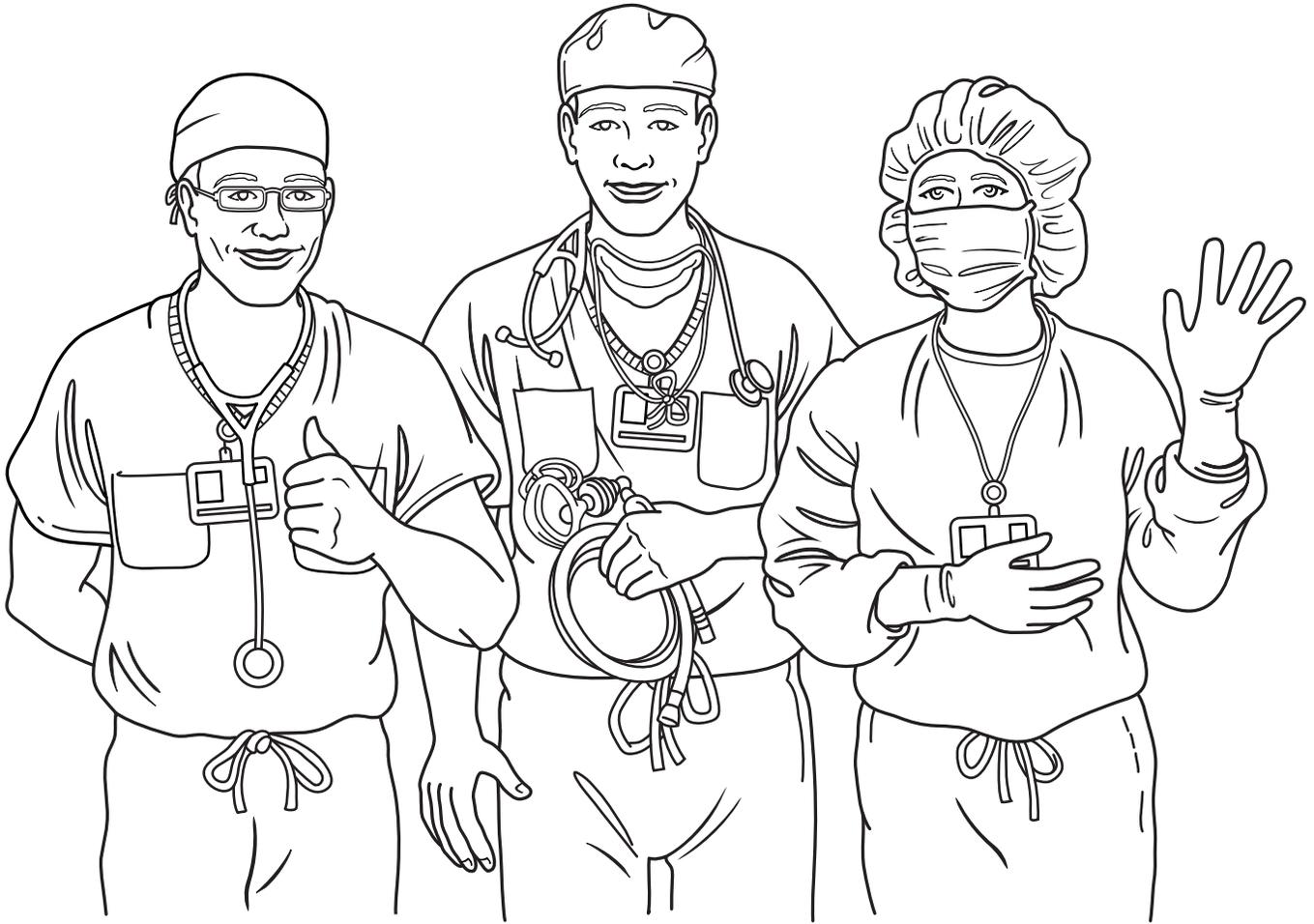
Listens to your heart and lungs

**6. EKG Leads :**

Sticky Patches that go on your chest to measure your heartbeat



**While you are waiting, you will meet some other helpers. You can make a list of all the people you meet!**



Your **Surgeon:**

This is the doctor that helps your body while you are asleep.

Your **Anesthesiologist:**

This is the doctor who gives you sleep medicine to help keep you safe and comfortable during surgery. Anesthesia is another word for sleep medicine.

**OR Nurse:**

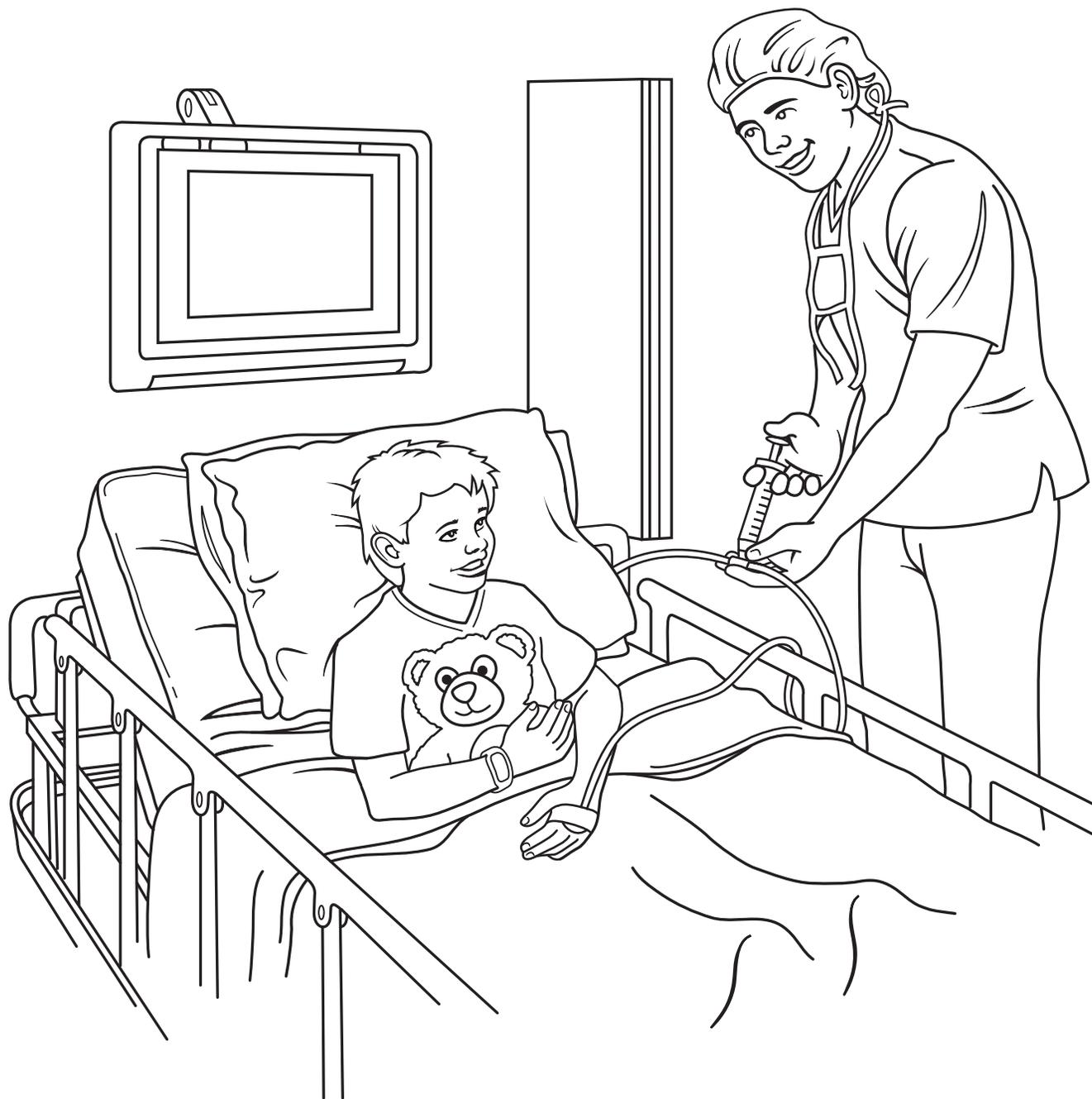
This is the nurse that helps all of your doctors have the tools they need during your surgery.

**Your doctors will talk about the best way for you to fall asleep with sleep medicine. There are two ways this medicine can be given.**



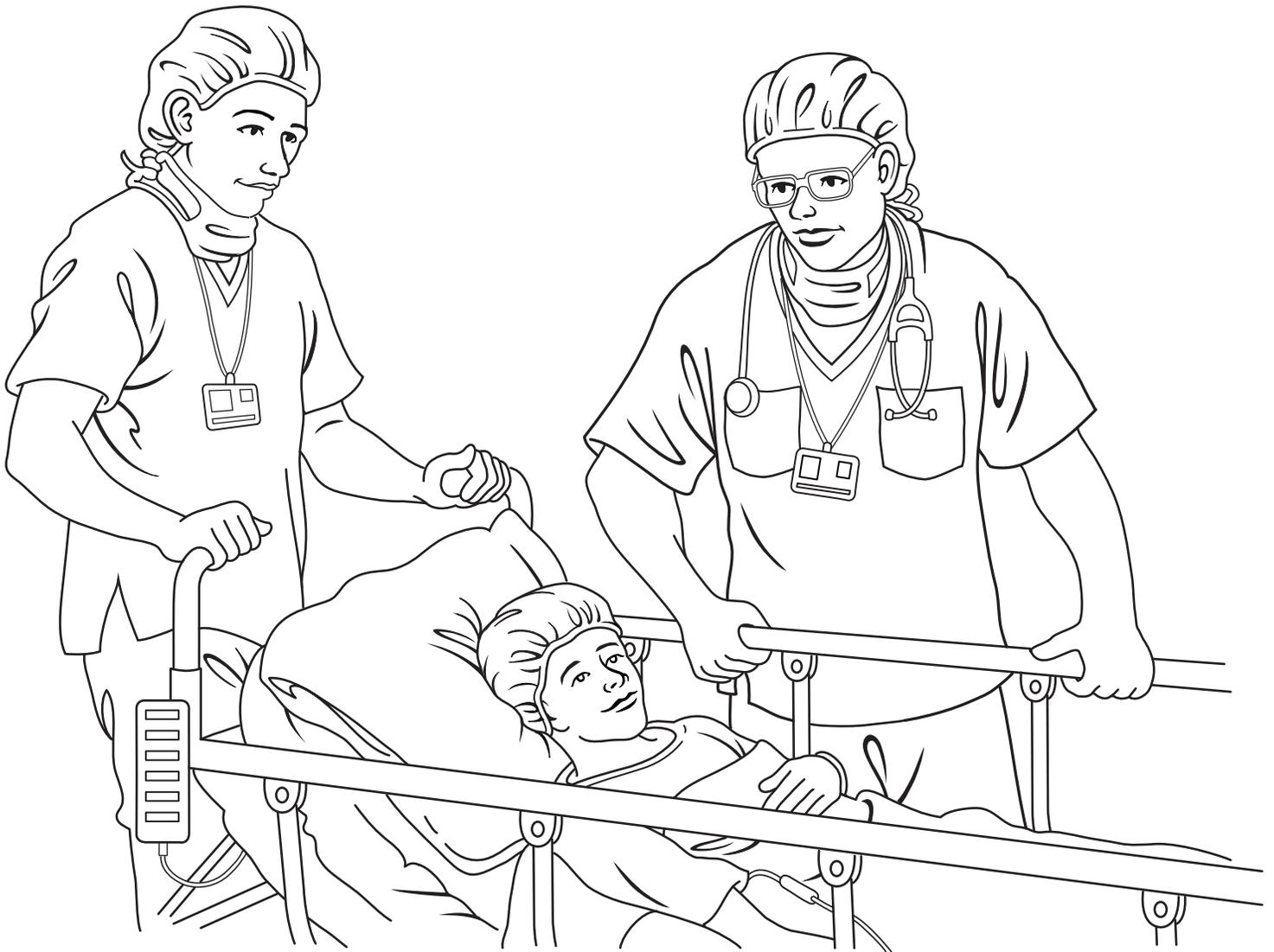
**The first way is to breathe medicine through a soft mask. Your mask will fit over your nose and mouth. Sometimes it helps to practice breathing while you are waiting. What does your mask remind you of?**

The second way to get sleep medicine is through a small plastic straw called an IV. An IV helps medicine go into your vein and then to the rest of your body.



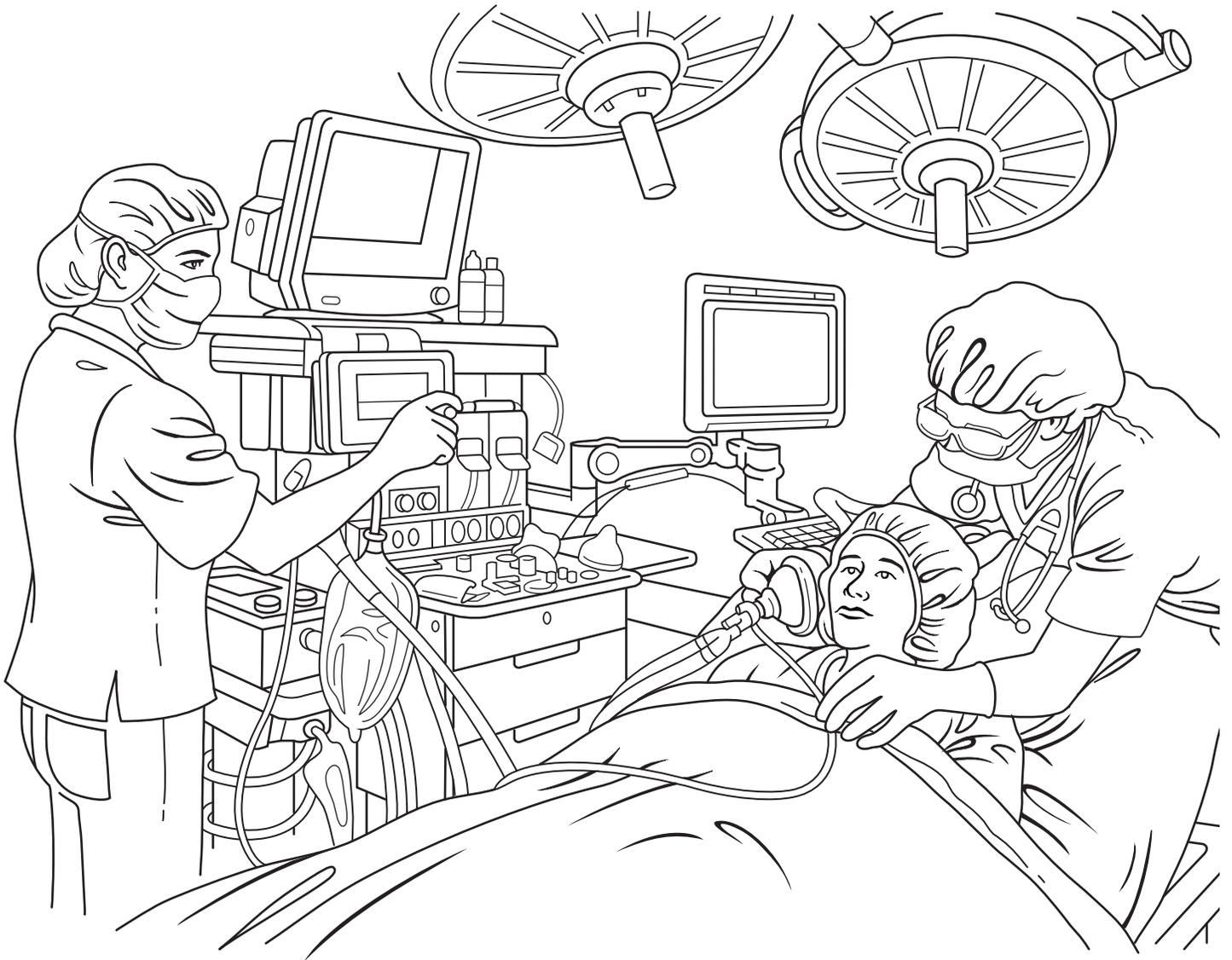
Your doctor will help decide which way you will get your sleep medicine.

**After you talk with your surgery team, it will be time to ride on your bed to the operating room. The operating room is where your surgery happens.**



**You might feel a little nervous but everyone is there to help you! Remember you will get sleep medicine before your surgery. The medicine will help you fall asleep and stay asleep until your doctor is done.**

**In the operating room, everyone will be wearing special clothing, hats, and masks to make sure everything is clean.**



**The operating room has a lot of equipment like two big lights and another bed for you to rest on during surgery. What else do you see?**

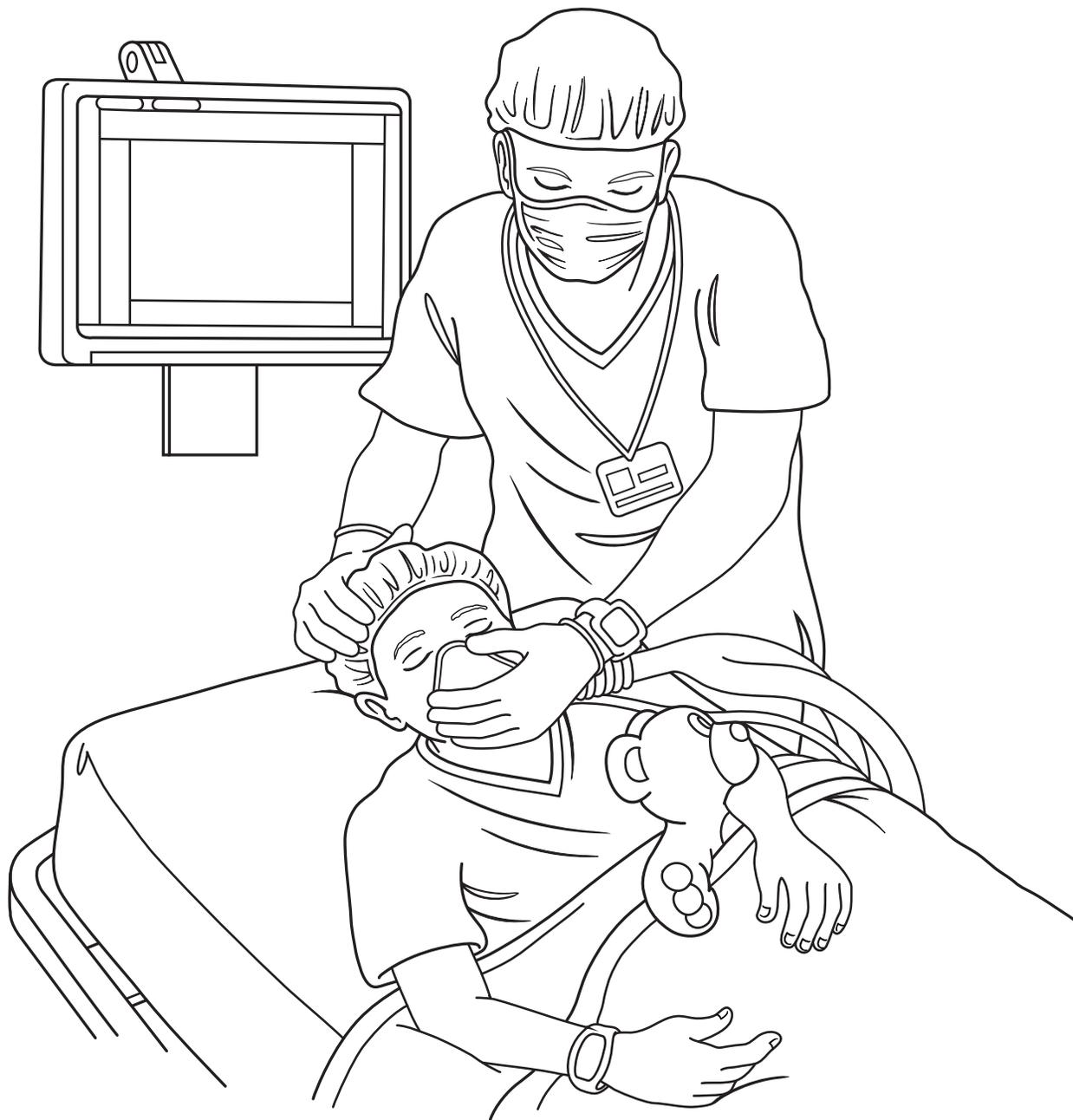
To get ready, your surgery team will make sure you are comfortable and safe. They will use some of the same check-up tools you have seen before.



- Pulse Oximeter
- EKG Leads
- Wrist Band
- Blood Pressure Cuff

See if you can match the number to the tool.

**Soon, your anesthesiologist will help you fall asleep. The medicine works fast! You will not feel, hear, or see anything while you are asleep.**

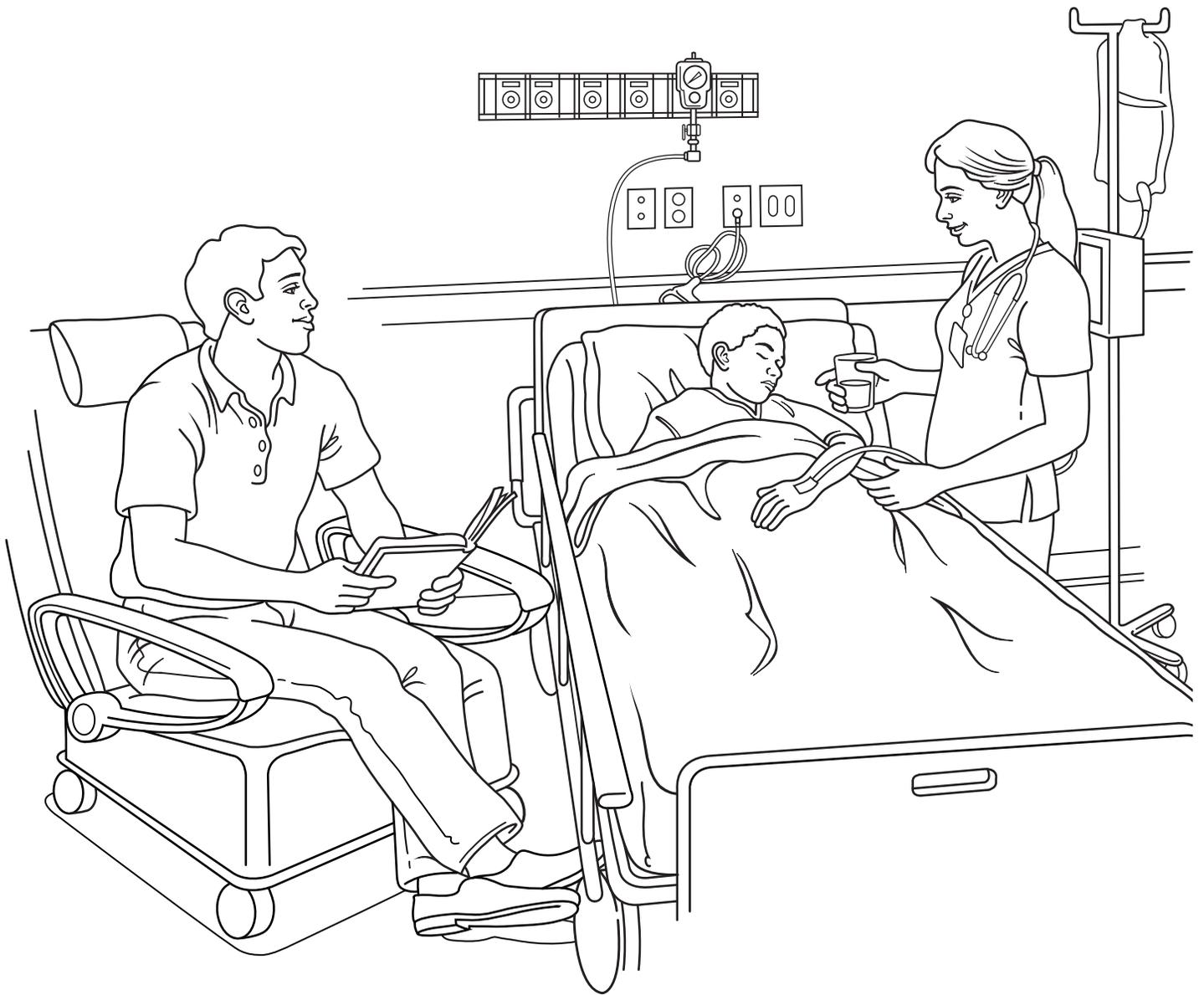


**Some kids like to think about their favorite things while they are falling asleep, like racecars, dinosaurs, or unicorns. What do you want to think about while you are falling asleep?**

**Your surgery team will take good care of you while your grown-up waits for surgery to be finished.**

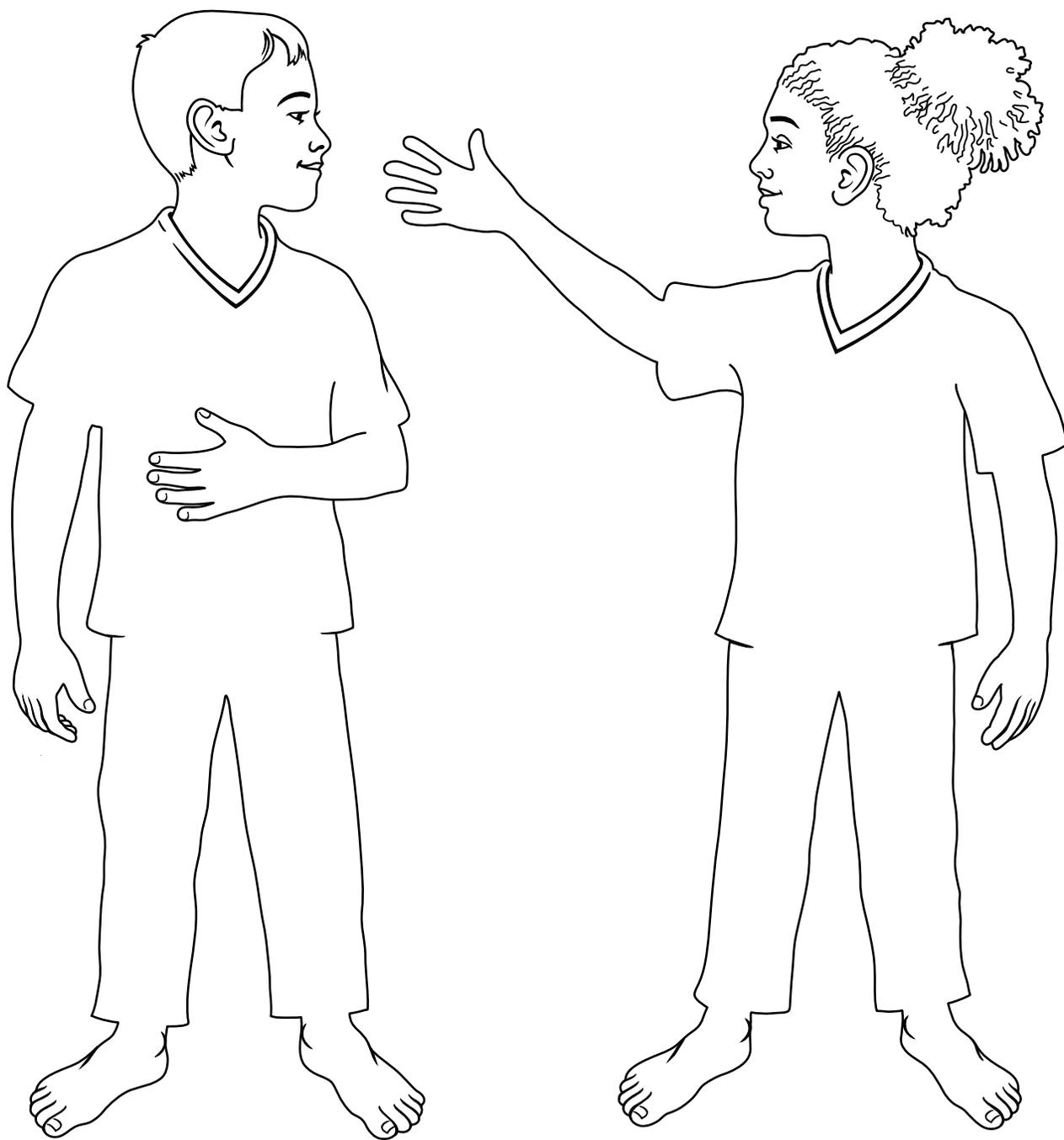


**You will go to a recovery room when your surgery is finished.  
Your grown-up will be there while you are waking up.**



**A nurse will make sure you are comfortable. When your body is  
ready, they will bring you something to drink or a snack.**

**As you wake up you will see your IV straw with a bandage on top.  
Your IV can give you medicine to feel better.**

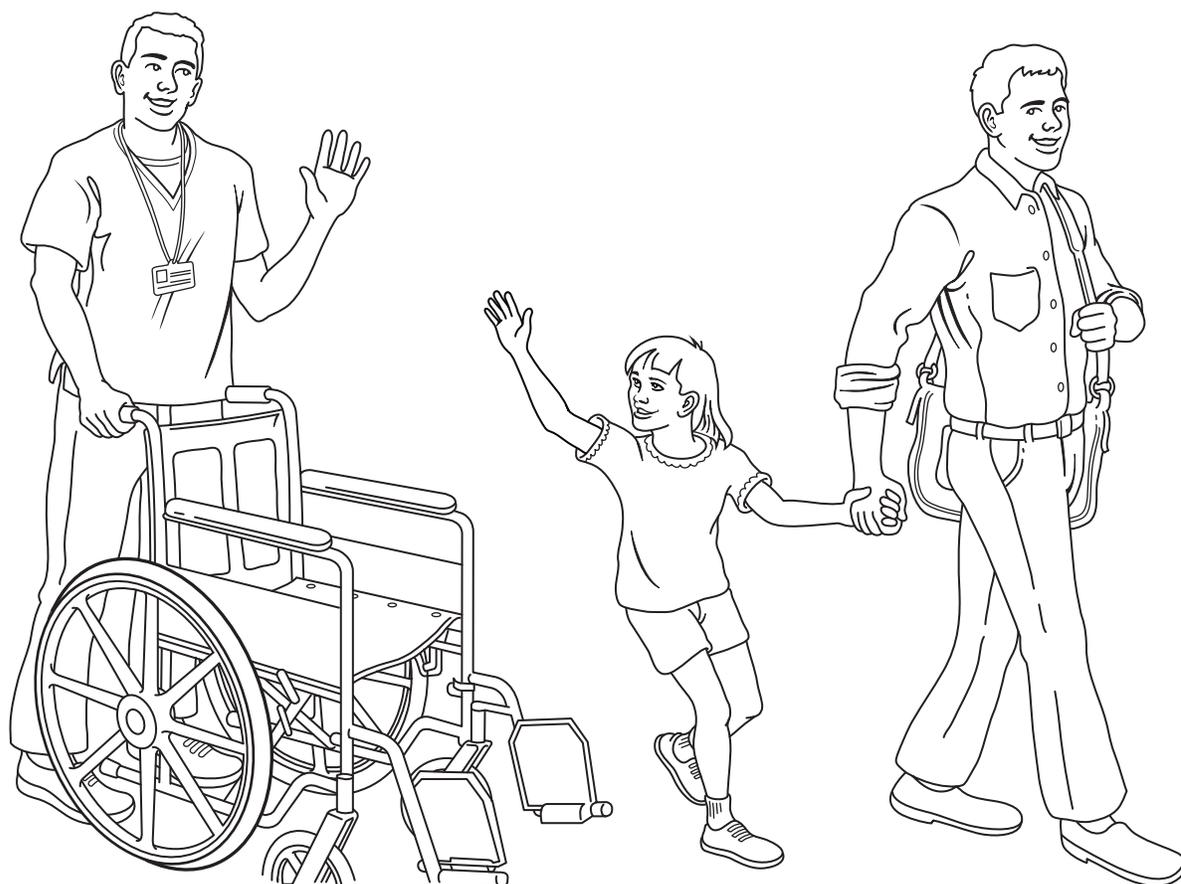


**You might also have a bandage, cast, or other tube after your surgery. Draw what you will see when you wake up.**

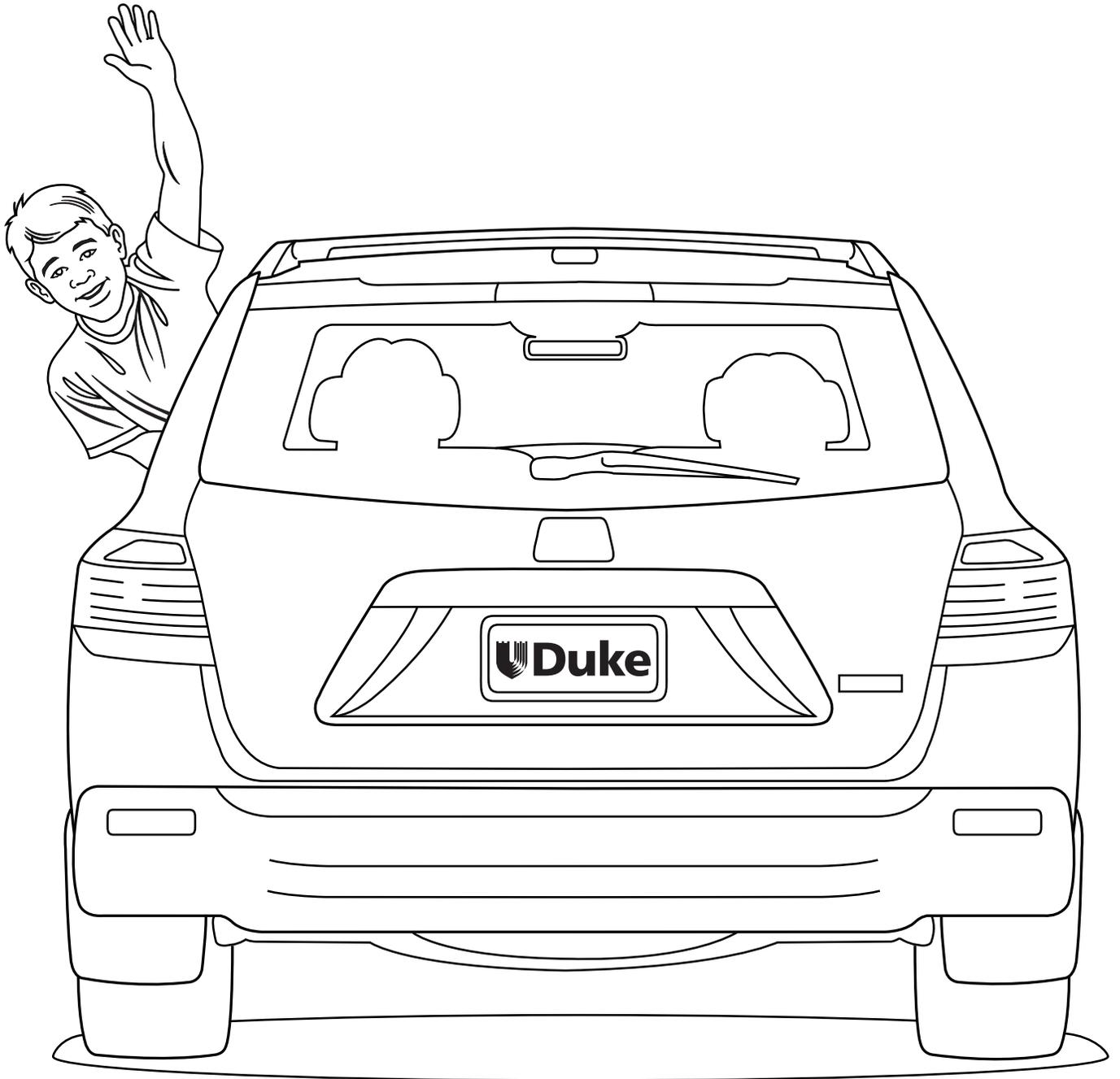
**Your doctor may decide that you need to spend the night in the hospital after your surgery.**



**Or they may decide that you are well enough to go home right away. Either way, there will be lots of people taking care of you.**



Now you know a little bit more about coming to the hospital for surgery. If you have any questions, you can ask your grown-up or someone from your surgery team. Everyone at Duke Children's Hospital is looking forward to seeing you soon!





## How should I prepare my child for surgery?

**Prepare yourself:** We understand that a child having surgery can be stressful for the entire family. Children who sense a parent's anxiety tend to be anxious too. Make sure that your questions and concerns are addressed so that you can be as comfortable as possible.

### **What do I tell my child and how should I start?**

It is important to tell your child about coming to the hospital and their surgery so they have time to ask questions. Use simple language to describe why your child needs a surgery and when it will happen. For example, "Your doctor needs to look in your ears while you are asleep and not feeling". Be mindful of potential misunderstandings such as needing to clarify how anesthesia is different from when your child sleeps at home. Encourage your child to ask questions and share their feelings about having a surgery. Simple, honest answers and explanations work best. Child Life Specialists and other hospital staff can help explain these and any other concerns that may be expressed during discussion with your child. *Remember, brothers and sisters may have questions too.*

**Pre-operative tours:** You can arrange a pre-operative tour with the Duke Child Life Department. A tour is a great way to familiarize you and your child with the hospital environment in a safe and non-threatening way. Children and families may meet staff members, become more familiar with some of the medical equipment, and address any specific concerns about the day of surgery.

**Play:** Pretend play may help your child rehearse events related to coming to the hospital in a safe environment. You can use a doll or stuffed animal to show your child where their surgery will be and to practice medical experiences like checking blood pressure or using a stethoscope. Take-home hospital materials such as surgical hats and masks are provided during pre-operative tours and can also be used for dress-up and practice.

**Encourage your child to participate:** Talk to your child about how they can get ready or prepare for surgery. Give realistic choices such as allowing your child to choose what to eat the night before or what to wear when they arrive. Encourage your child to choose a few items to bring to the hospital such as a favorite doll, stuffed animal, blanket, or small game or toy. These types of items help children feel more comfortable in the hospital environment.

**Review:** Go over surgery information a few days before your child's procedure or operation. Older children may need more time to process information or ask questions. It can be helpful to use medical play as part of this review. Discuss the expected plan for going home, the recovery period and when your child may be able to return to some of their favorite activities. Some children may also want to talk about returning to school and how to talk with friends and family about their surgery experience.

If you have questions regarding  
how to prepare your child for surgery or  
if you'd like to schedule a pre-operative tour:

**Email [Child\\_Life\\_Surgery@duke.edu](mailto:Child_Life_Surgery@duke.edu)  
Or call: 919-668-4205**