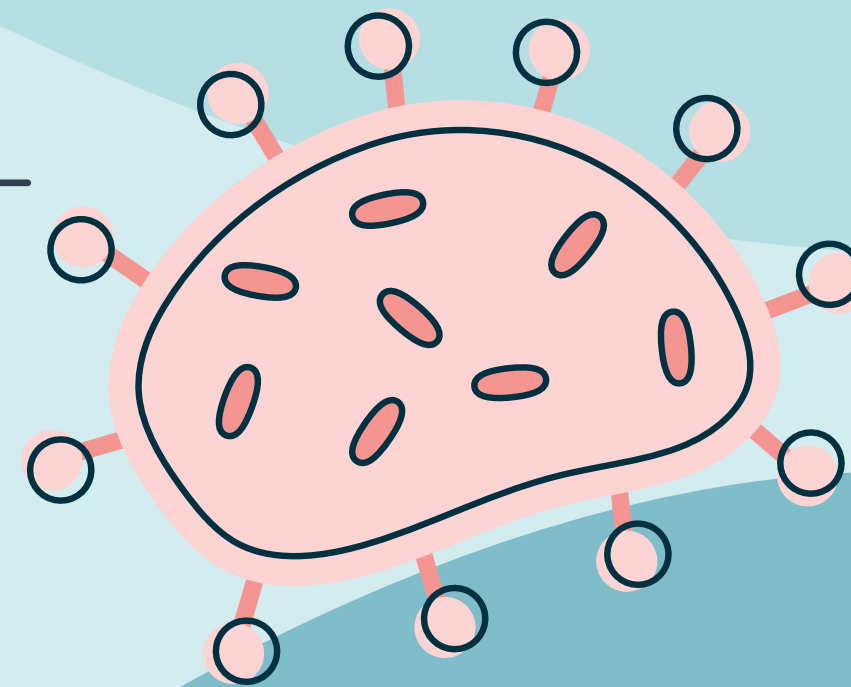


Ellie learns about vaccination

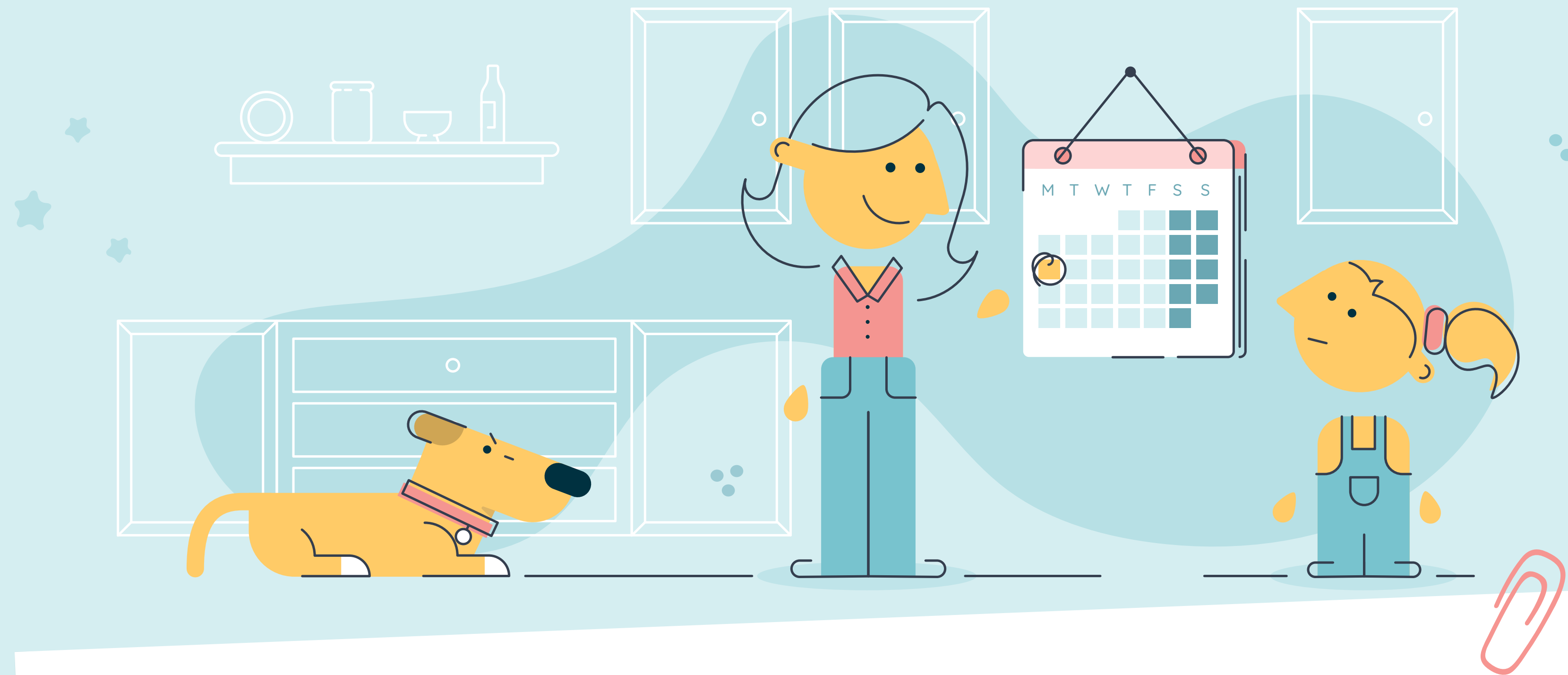




Weekends were usually busy for Ellie, including getting ready for the school week ahead.

Ellie looked at the family calendar and read the entry for Monday: 'Royal Observatory'.

Ellie thought this sounded exciting but wasn't sure if this would be a school trip. Ellie turned to her mother and asked: "Am I on a school trip Monday? Do I need to get anything ready? What is the Royal Observatory?"



Gosh, so many questions - Ellie's mum, Susan, looked confused. "Are you sure you're looking at the right day?" she asked before checking the calendar herself. "Ah" Susan continued. "You were looking at the wrong day Ellie. Today is the tenth. Monday is vaccination day."

It was now Ellie's turn to look confused. "Oh ok" replied Ellie. "Do I need to get anything ready for that instead?" Ellie asked.

"No dear, not at all" Ellie's mum replied. "It's Rusty who is getting a vaccination from the vet."

The family dog, Rusty, who was curled up on the floor pretending to sleep, opened one eye and raised an eyebrow when his name was mentioned.



“Oh! Is Rusty unwell?” asked Ellie.

“No he’s fit and well” said Susan.
“And your stepfather and I want him to stay that way. That’s why he’s booked in for a vaccination. Rusty has the same vaccinations every year.”

Rusty opened his other eye now, and let out a disapproving sigh!




SIGH!

Vaccination



“Oh!” Ellie had not realised Rusty had annual vaccinations. Ellie wanted to know more: “Vacc... vacc...” Ellie struggled to say the word ‘vaccination’, so she and her mum practised it together a few times. Ellie tried to say the word vaccination without help and she managed it: “vaccination, vaccination, vaccination” said Ellie triumphantly – she was pleased she had learnt and mastered a new word today, but she still wanted to know what it meant.



“So is this vaccination thing just for dogs, or do other pets get it too?” asked Ellie.

“It’s certainly not just for dogs” replied Susan. “There are vaccinations for pets and other animals. There are also different vaccinations that help protect people from certain diseases so they can avoid the need for medical care. Vaccinations also help stop the spread of certain infections.”

Ellie remained curious.





“Have I had a vaccination?” asked Ellie.

“Yes dear, you have had a few vaccinations but you would have been too young to remember.”

Ellie was once again surprised:
“No I don’t remember. Can you tell me more?”

“Why don’t we sit down with some milk and fruit and I can explain some more, after all, it’s not just you in this family who has been vaccinated against diseases.”

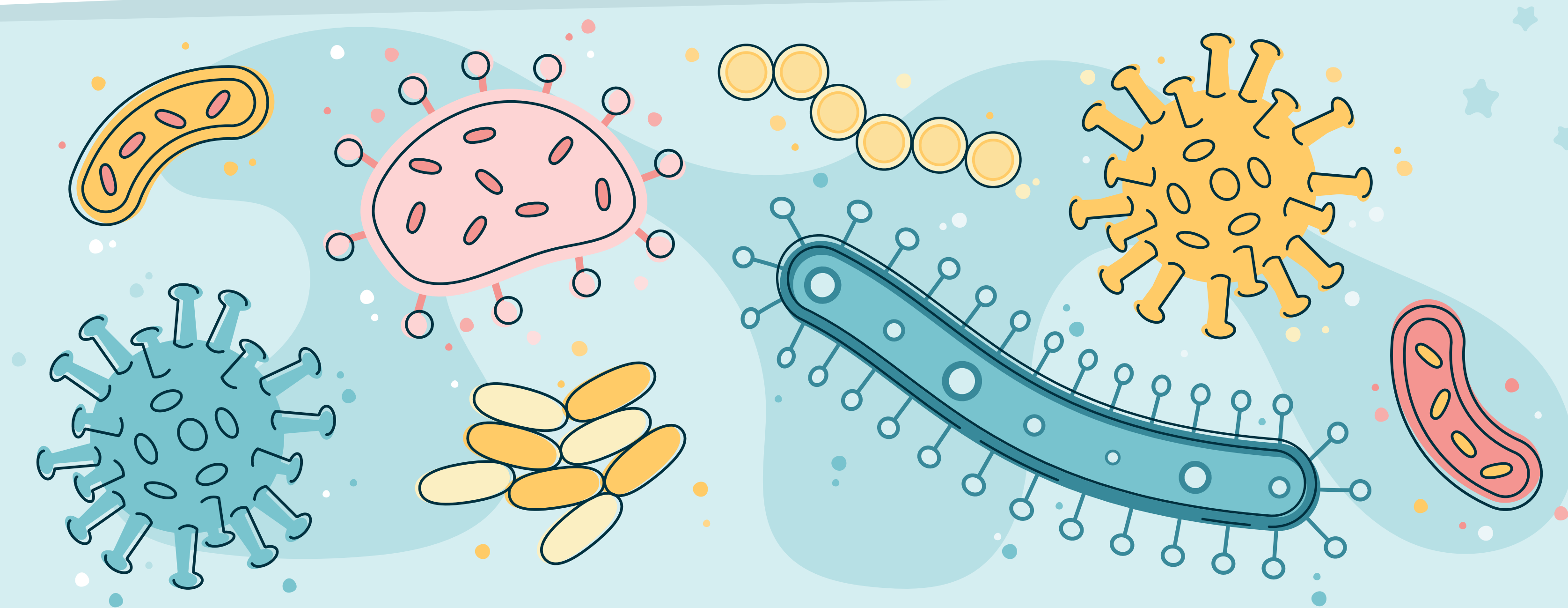


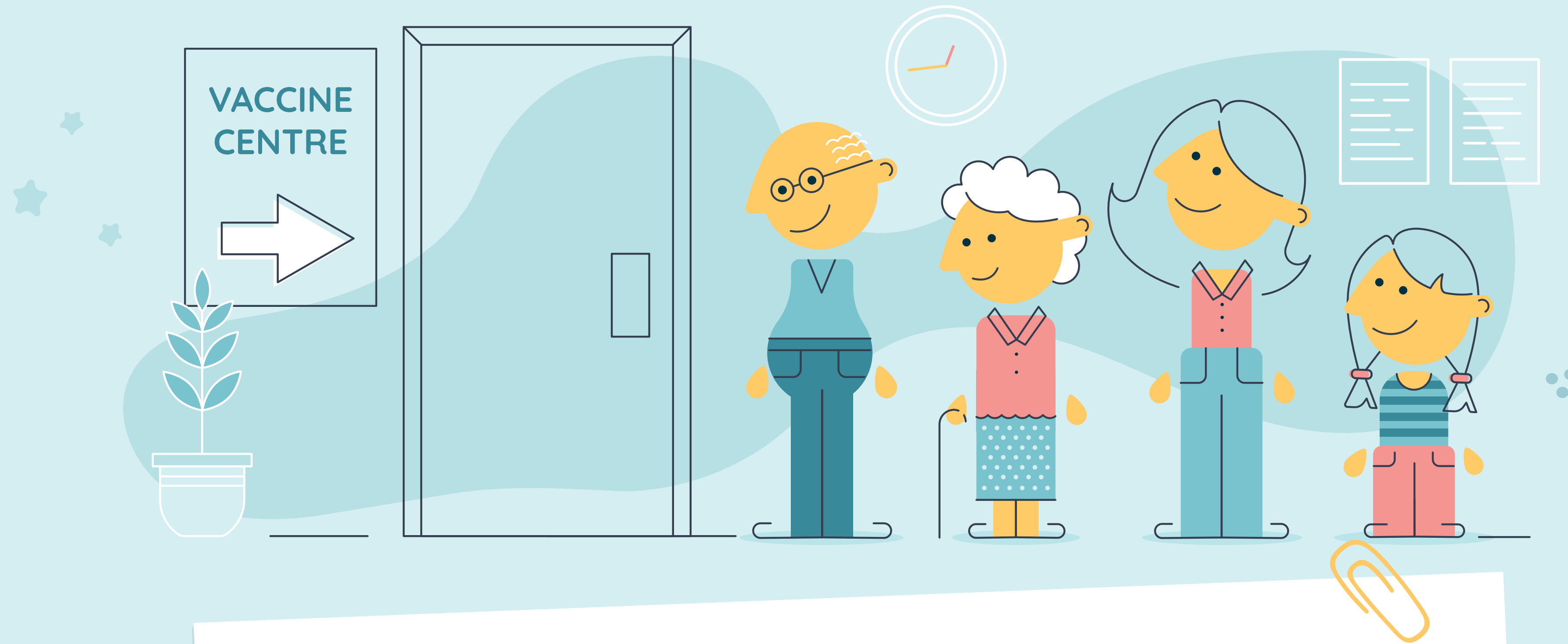
Five minutes later, Susan had served milk and fruit at the kitchen table, and Mags, Ellie's favourite teddy, had come to join them – though Mags had been hoping for biscuits with the milk!

Susan started to talk to Ellie about vaccination: "I took you to be vaccinated against..." Susan paused to count on her fingers as she listed the vaccinations in her head.

"Yes, it was twelve different diseases in total including measles, diphtheria, mumps, tetanus, polio, whooping cough, rotavirus and meningitis B."

"Wow, what a lot! How do you remember all those strange names?" asked Ellie.



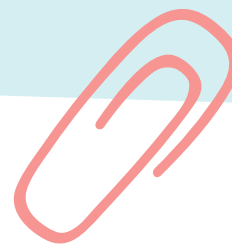


“Well, when you were born, I read a lot of information about those diseases and how ill they can make children. I was certainly pleased to discover there is a vaccine for each of those diseases” replied Susan.

Ellie then reminded her mum that she had mentioned other family members having had vaccinations too.

“That’s right” said Susan. “I had vaccinations when I was pregnant with you. Manchi had a vaccination last year and I think Poppa and Nanny Cooper had vaccinations for influenza and shingles recently.”

“That’s a lot of people getting lots of vaccinations” commented Ellie.

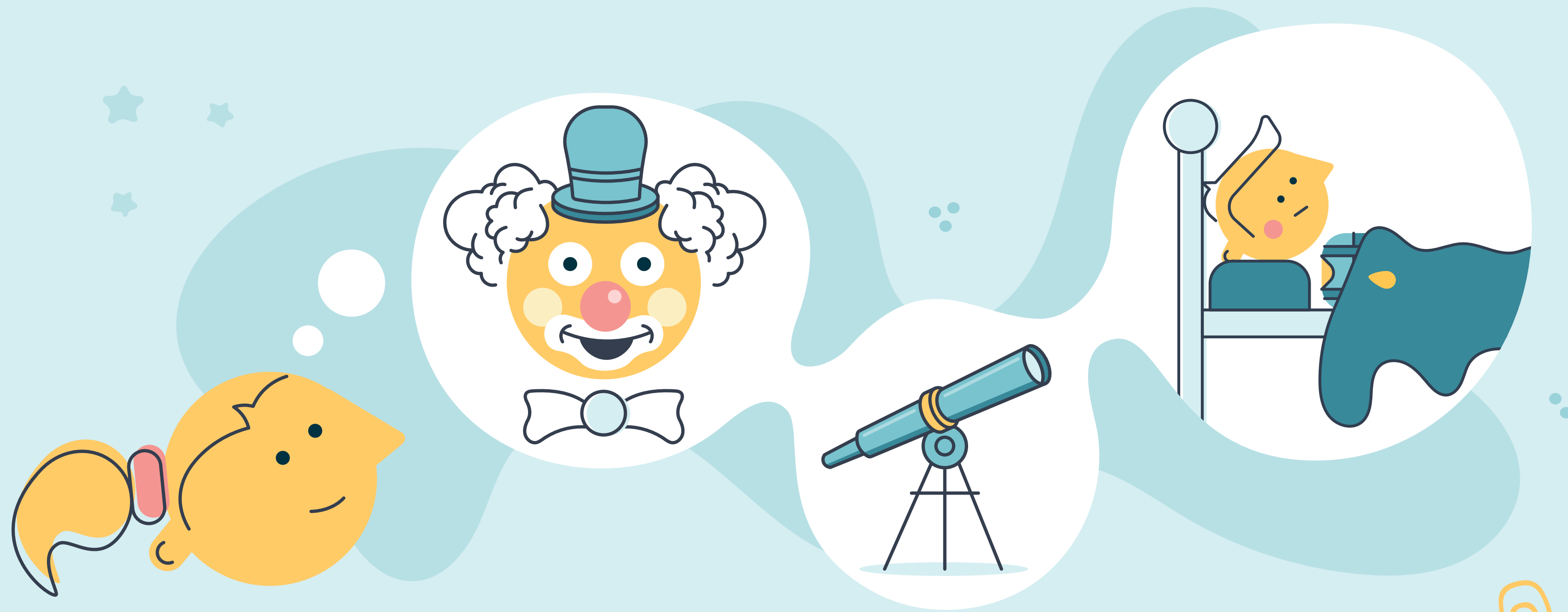


Susan agreed and went on to tell Ellie she remembered reading in one leaflet that vaccination has saved more lives and prevented more serious diseases than any advance in recent medical history.

Ellie asked for a second glass of milk and then asked how vaccinations work.

“A vaccine for a certain disease will help your body’s immune system get ready to recognise that disease if it comes across it again in the future. Your body can then fight that disease so you don’t get sick.” Susan paused to finish her cup of tea.





“Do you remember Pat in your class was very poorly last year?” Susan asked Ellie.

Ellie thought of Pat. Ellie remembered Pat’s birthday party with the clown that

performed magic tricks. Ellie could also remember the time Pat brought a small telescope into school for their science lesson. Ellie however, could not remember Pat being away from school, ill.

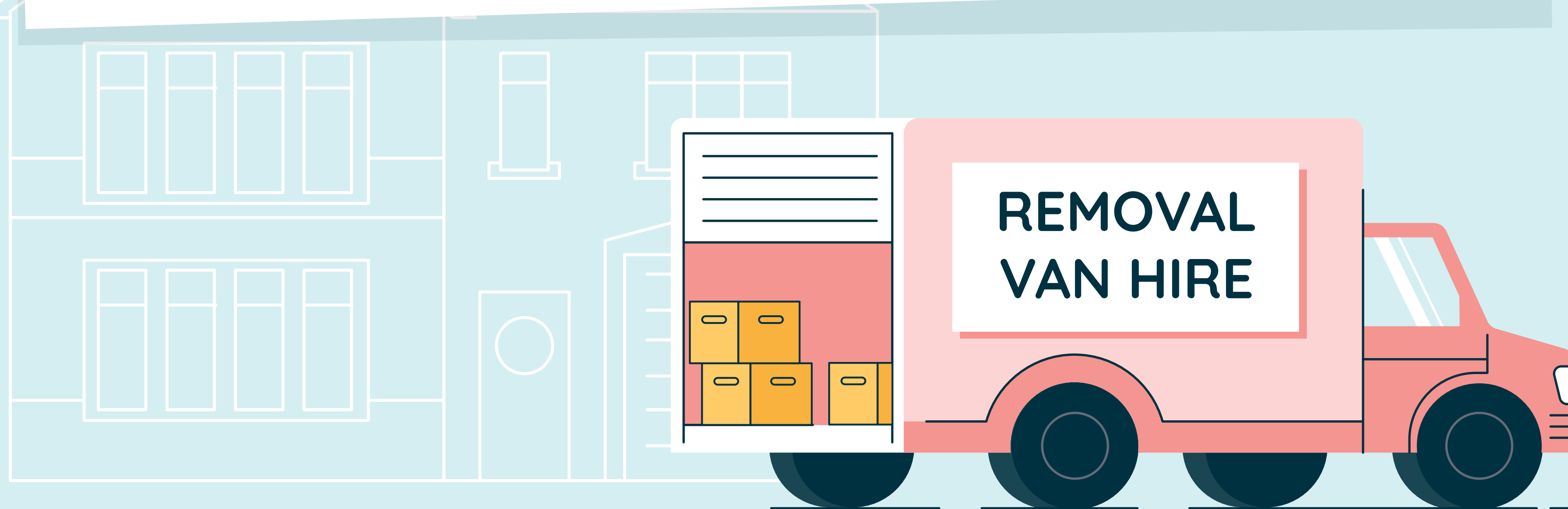
“Pat in your class had measles last year. It’s a very infectious disease. Pat was very poorly with it - coughing, sneezing and his mother told me he had a high fever and a nasty blotchy rash too.”

“Did the vaccination not work in Pat?” asked Ellie, most concerned.

“Pat’s mother told me that she and Pat’s father had been moving house when Pat was very little and unfortunately, they had forgotten to make sure Pat had all his vaccinations at the right time” replied Susan.

“In the end, Pat was quite fortunate because children can suffer complications from having measles like blindness, seizures and meningitis. Some poor children have even died from it. If you haven’t been vaccinated then you’re not protected. That’s why I made sure you were given the vaccine,

and a second dose of it. It’s important to make sure you’ve had the right vaccinations at the right time, and it’s important to get the whole population vaccinated to achieve herd immunity.





Ellie then had yet more questions for her mother about some of the words she had not come across before, like seizures, meningitis and herd immunity.

After ten more minutes of chatting at the kitchen table, Ellie had decided what she was going to

do next, which was to go searching in the dressing-up box. Ellie discarded the pirate costume. Out next came the ladybird costume but that wasn't what Ellie wanted either. Then Ellie found what she was looking for and within a minute, she was dressed as a nurse.

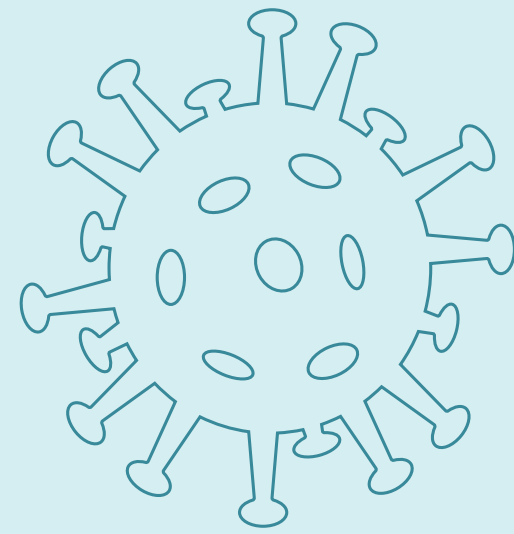
Ellie told her cuddly toys to form a neat queue.

Naturally, Mags was at the front of the queue wondering what Ellie would do next. Ellie then told the queue of patiently waiting cuddly toys that she had decided it was important that she vaccinate each of them in turn, starting with Mags. All the cuddly toys were happy to get their vaccinations from nurse Ellie, even though none had been told which diseases they were being vaccinated against!





For more stories featuring Ellie,
her family, friends and teddies,
as well as accompanying
teaching resources, visit:
www.abpischools.org.uk



Designed by tothepoint

Story by Thomas Andrews
Scientist and educationalist

