

Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis

My Story

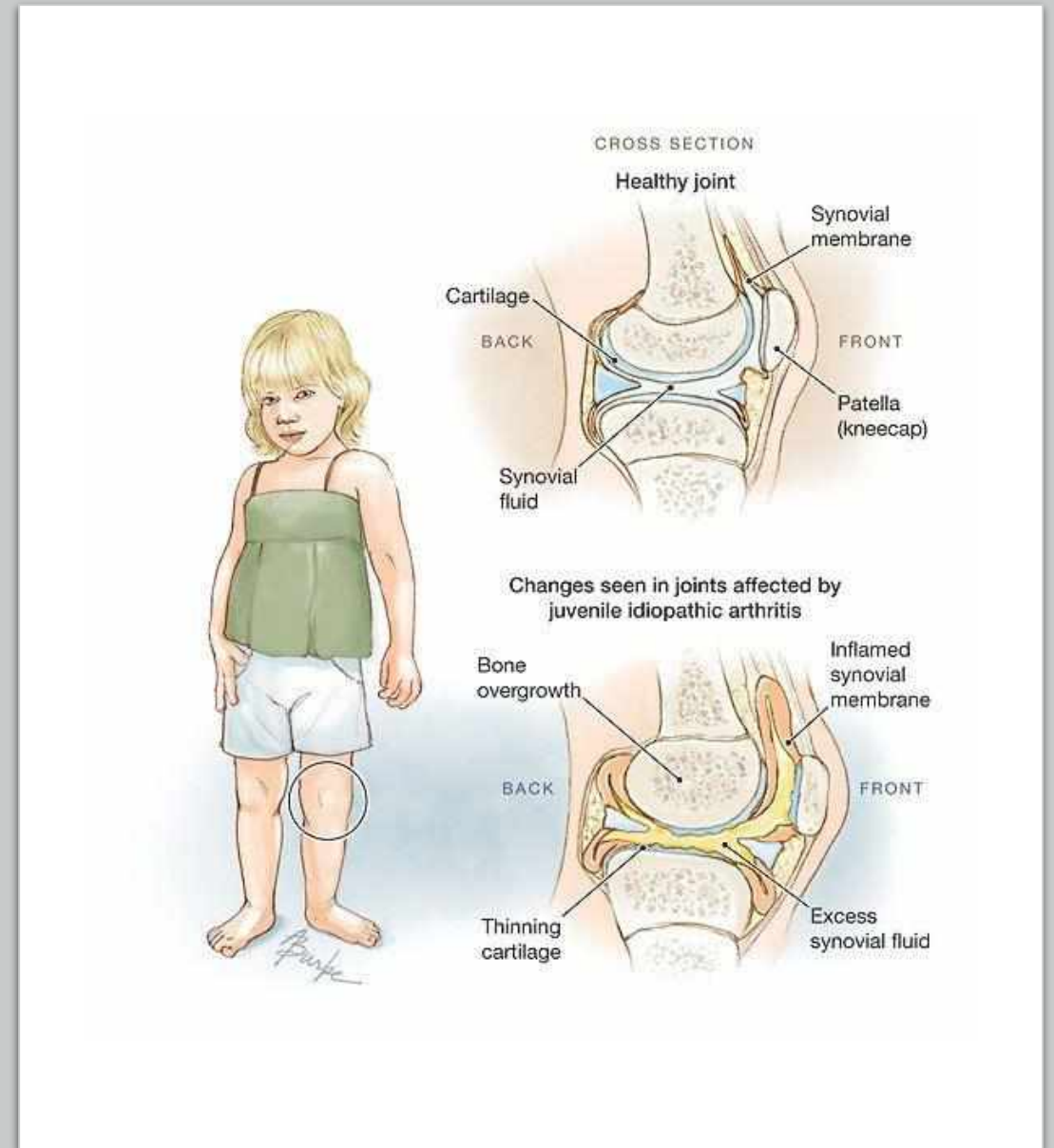
By Sienna Housbey



I am Sienna Housbey. I may only be 13 years old, but I suffer from Juvenile Arthritis. It's not just me with Juvenile Arthritis, over 5000 Australian children have it too.



Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) is swelling in the joints. If it isn't treated quickly it can affect the growth and development of a child. JIA can only be found in children and some children have a chance to grow out of it. Doctors still aren't sure what causes some children to get Juvenile Arthritis.

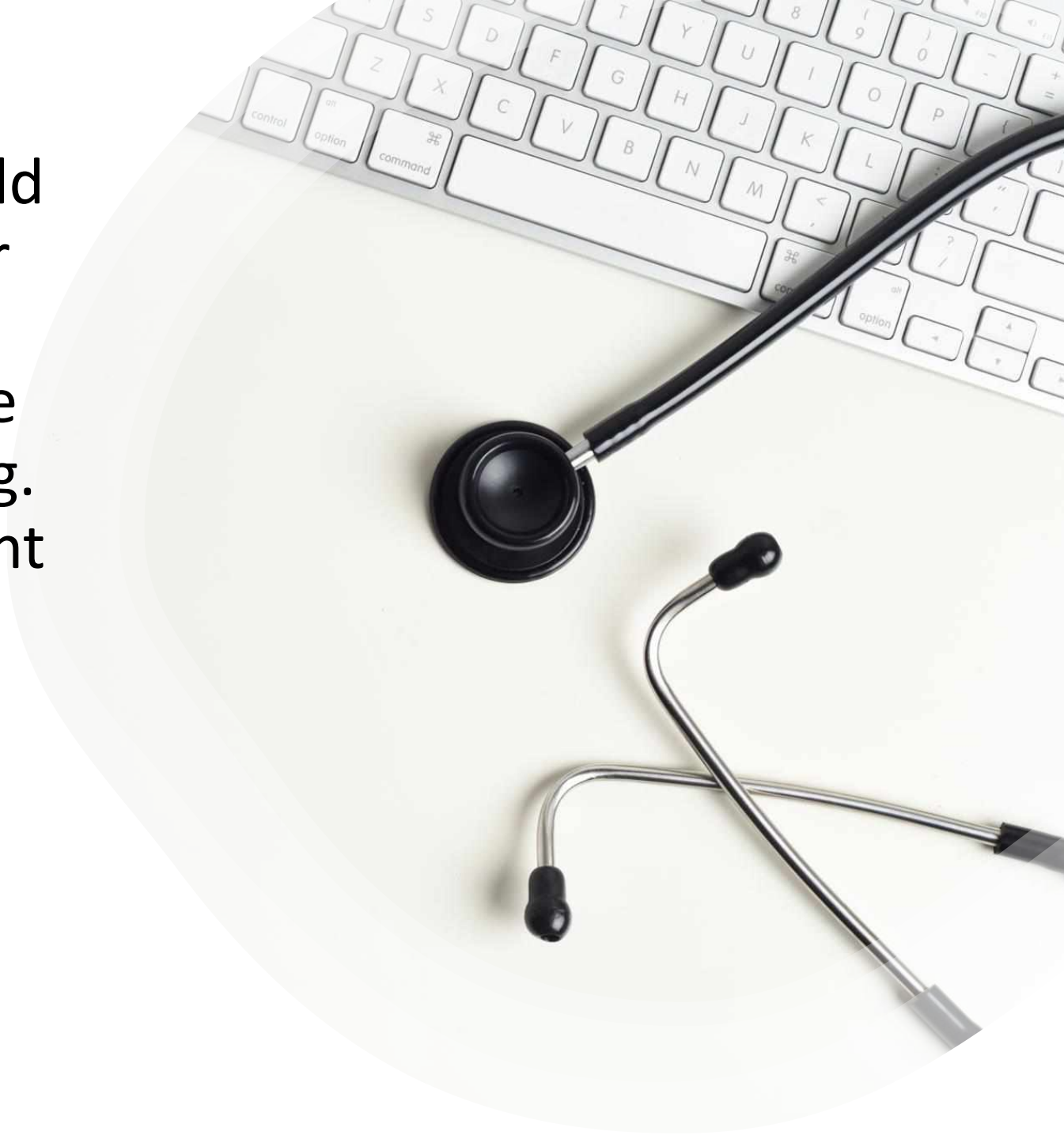


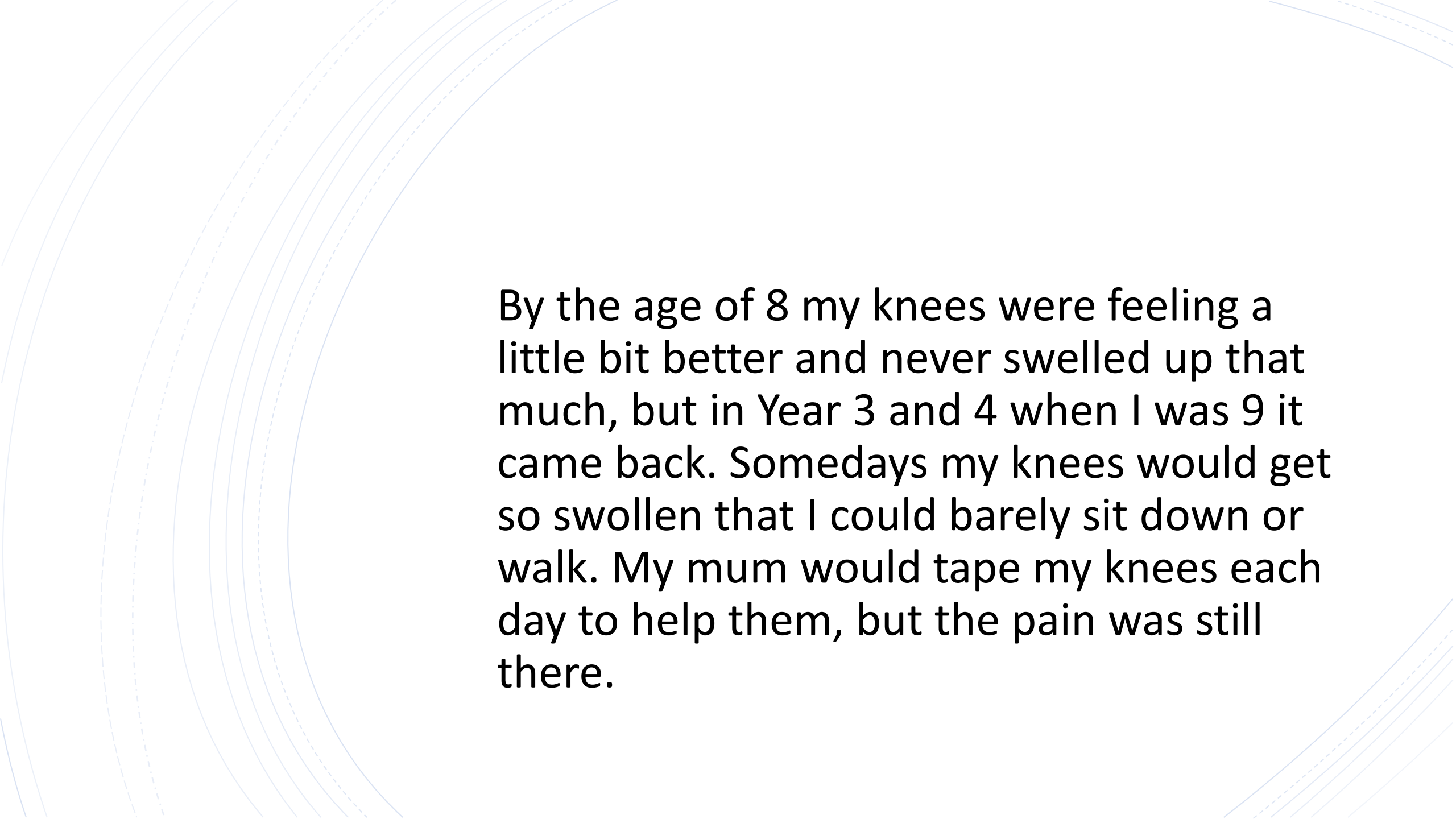
My Story

When I was 6, I would love to be active. I would play soccer, swim and dance. My parents would always ask me if my knees were ok. They could see how swollen my knees were, but what they didn't know was how painful it was.



Somedays my knees would be very swollen but other days they would be fine. My parents couldn't quite work out what was wrong. We went to many different doctors, but they all told us the same answer. The doctors would always say that I had tight tendons and I just needed to do stretches.

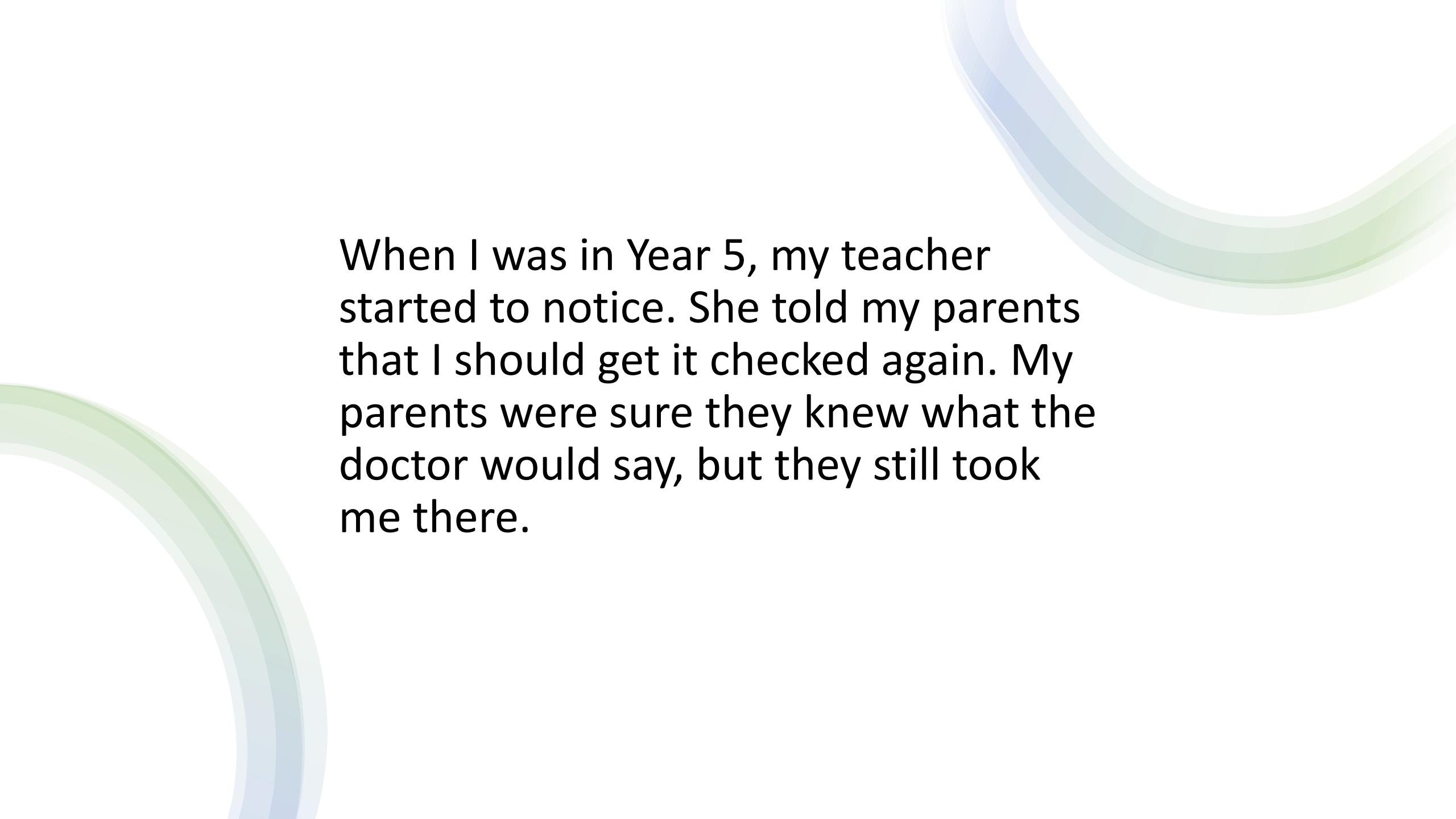




By the age of 8 my knees were feeling a little bit better and never swelled up that much, but in Year 3 and 4 when I was 9 it came back. Somedays my knees would get so swollen that I could barely sit down or walk. My mum would tape my knees each day to help them, but the pain was still there.

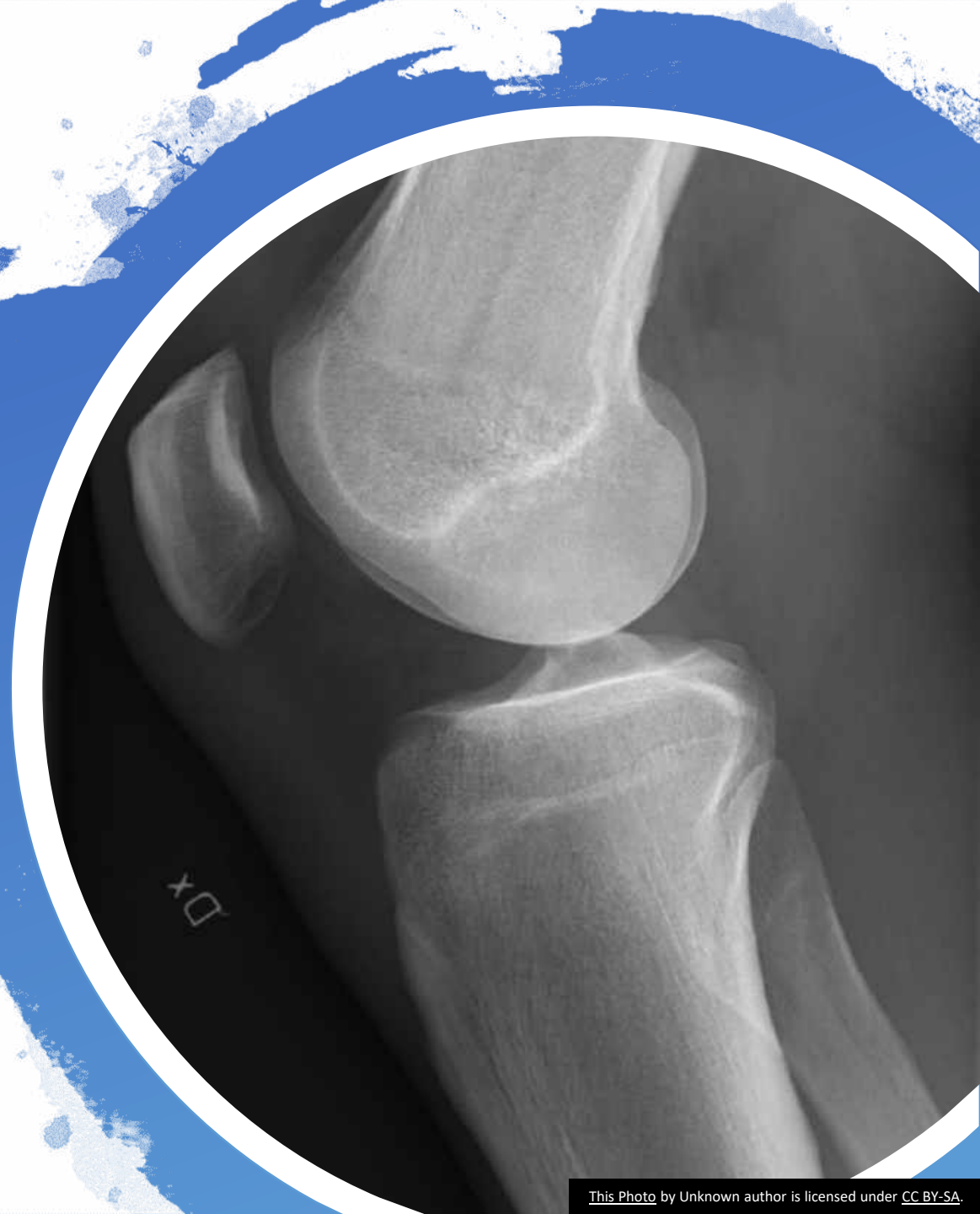
Even if my knees were swollen
I would still push through the
pain. My knees never stopped
me from doing what I loved





When I was in Year 5, my teacher started to notice. She told my parents that I should get it checked again. My parents were sure they knew what the doctor would say, but they still took me there.

This time there was a different result. My doctor told me to see an Orthopedic Surgeon. He took many x-rays of my bones and asked us to come back many times. The Orthopedic Surgeon didn't have the answer to my case and sent me to a Rheumatologist. That's when we finally got an answer.



Dr Chaitow was the name of my Rheumatologist. He knew exactly what I had and how to treat it. He prescribed different medications and told me I had to have a special type of injections done on my knees. We would have to spend a day at the hospital while it happened. It was scary as I didn't know what to expect.




Once I got it all done it was like a dream. My knees had amazing movement and I was able to get back to doing the things I love. My rheumatologist also told me about a camp they run for kids with Juvenile Arthritis.



I also have Juvenile Arthritis in my fingers. My doctor sent me to an Occupational Therapist, who made me a splint to wear at night to help them to straighten.

I also found that having Juvenile Arthritis requires a lot of medication! After my initial diagnosis, my doctor asked me to take 2 tablets a day. On Friday and Sunday, I had to take an extra tablet. Some medication had different side effects too. Sometimes the Friday tablet would make me feel a bit sick. As I am taking all this medication, I have to get a blood test every 6 months. I still don't like blood tests, but we have found some cream that can help numb the area.





Having Juvenile Arthritis may seem scary at times. You will have to have many different tests, medications, treatments, X-rays and even MRI's, but in the end it all works out. I have got so much more movement back in my knees after all the treatment and hopefully my fingers will improve too.

For more information about Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis, please go to <https://arthritisaustralia.com.au/types-of-arthritis/jia/>

