MY TRIP TO THE HOSPITAL

Coloring Book

A GIFT TO _____

FROM _____

MY TRIP
TO THE HOSPITAL
Coloring Book

TO MOM AND DAD

The journey that a child makes to the hospital or to an ambulatory surgery center can never be a pleasure trip, but it is easier and safer today than ever before.

Many parents remember their own childhood experiences during a tonsillectomy or other procedure — the lonesome ride down a long hospital corridor, the waiting for the anesthesia to begin, the separation from Mom and Dad, and the wondering what was next and would it ever end.

So much of this has changed today. The parents are involved more and more with the care of the child. They usually are allowed to go with the child for various tests, to go to the operating room suite, and sometimes to be present when the anesthesia is begun on their child and when the child awakens. Many of the doctors, nurses and other personnel have special training in the care of children even though your child may not be in a pediatric hospital.

However, in the last decade great strides have been made in patient safety. We have new anesthetic drugs, types of equipment and monitors. Regardless, even minor operations and hospitalizations represent an event of great emotional distress for any child. We hope this coloring book will help you and your child to better understand about surgery and anesthesia.

What Can You Do To Help Your Child?

It is most important that you tell your child as much as possible about the operation beforehand. This will prepare your child for the experience. In the case of a young child who is three or four years of age, explaining what will happen two or three days beforehand is sufficient time. The older child needs more time to prepare and adjust to the idea of surgery. A parent must tell the child the truth. It does not need to be in grim detail, but it should be told as gently and honestly as possible. This will increase the faith and trust that the child has in the parents and the medical team. At times, parents tell children "a little white lie" to try and make things easier for the child. This does not work and it might only make matters worse. Children are most trusting when told the truth.

In order to explain the operation to your child, you must understand what the operation is and what is involved. For that reason, you should carefully question the medical staff about your concerns. If you don't understand, please ask again until you have a clear understanding. This will also help to reduce some of your concerns and fears about surgery and anesthesia.

Explain to your child that he or she should listen and try to understand all of the instructions and explanations from the doctors and nurses. If your child doesn't understand, he or she should ask questions. At times, your child may begin to misbehave because of worry and nervousness about the operation. However, please never tell your child that if he or she misbehaves or won't listen, he or she will be given a shot as punishment. It is extremely important that your child trust the doctors and nurses and can realize that they are friends.

It is also important in a hospital setting for you, as a parent, not to use the term, "goodbye," if you do not accompany the child into the operating room or for a test. You do not want to make your child feel abandoned. Instead you should say, "I'll be waiting right here for you." When adequately prepared, the child adjusts remarkably well to strange surroundings when among "friends."

What Does The Anesthesiologist Do For Your Child?

As a parent you should realize what anesthesia is and why it is necessary. Specifically, anesthesia is a state of controlled unconsciousness produced by special medications and gases that have temporary effects on every organ of the body. Because the medications and gases are being regulated constantly during the operation by the anesthesiologist, the child will remain in this special kind of controlled unconsciousness and will feel no pain, will not wake up during the operation, and will remember nothing.

The main task of the anesthesiologist during surgery is to carefully regulate and individualize the child's anesthetic and medical care. When the operation or the special test is complete, the anesthesiologist turns off the anesthetic agents and skillfully reverses the effects of the medications.

In summary, children are very inquisitive and feel much better and are able to cooperate with the medical team if they know beforehand why they are going to have an operation or a special test, and what part the anesthesiologist will play in their care.

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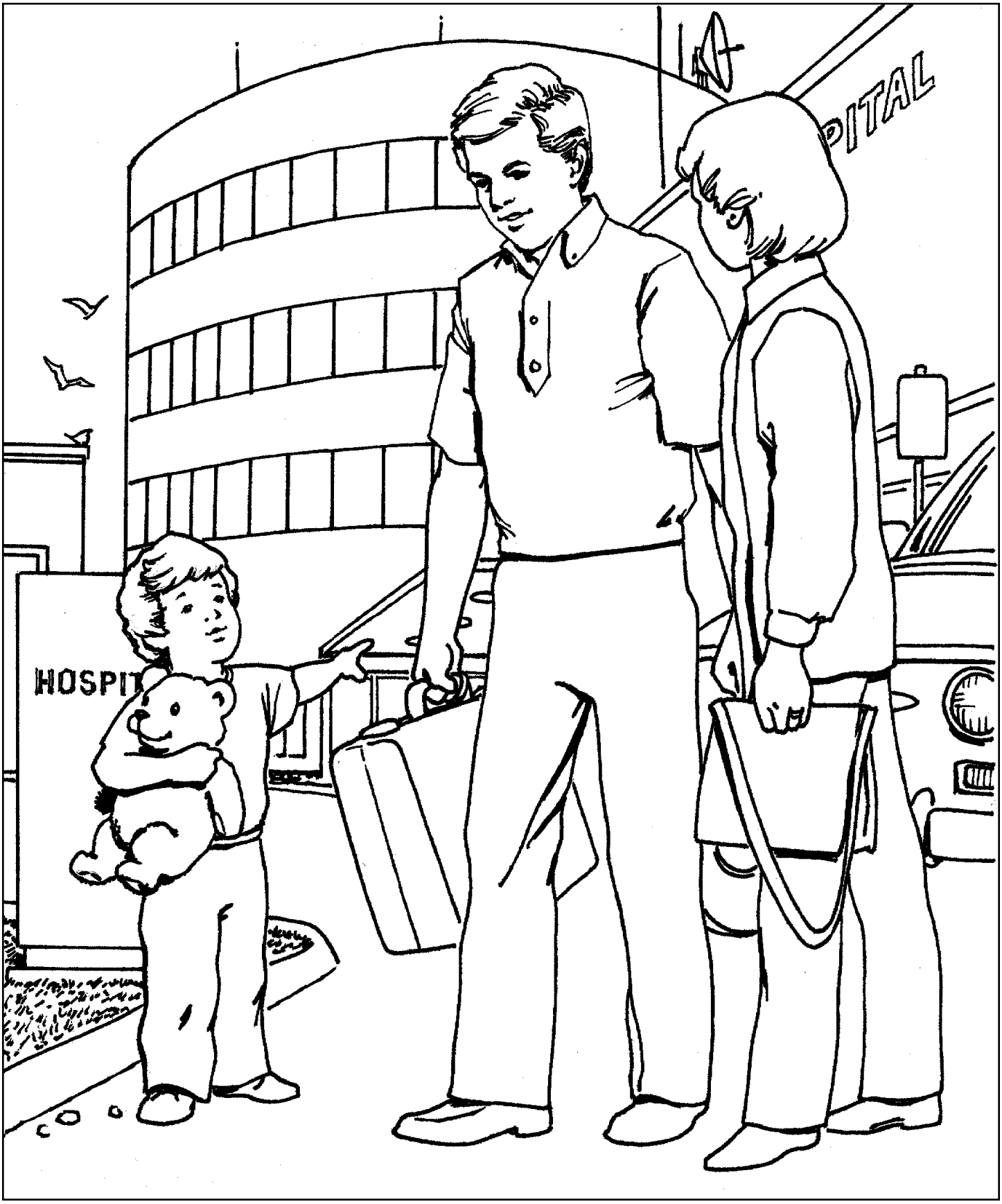
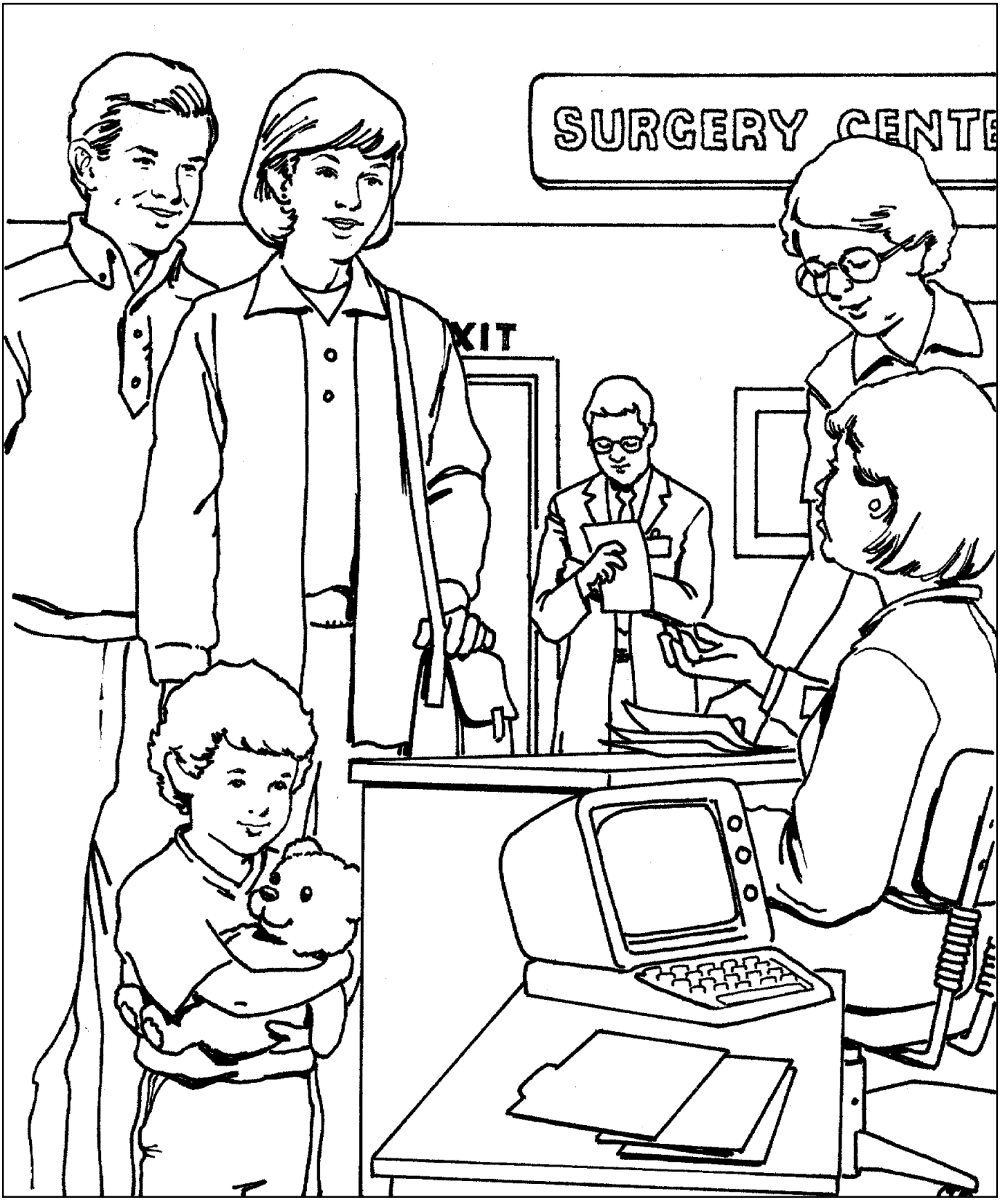
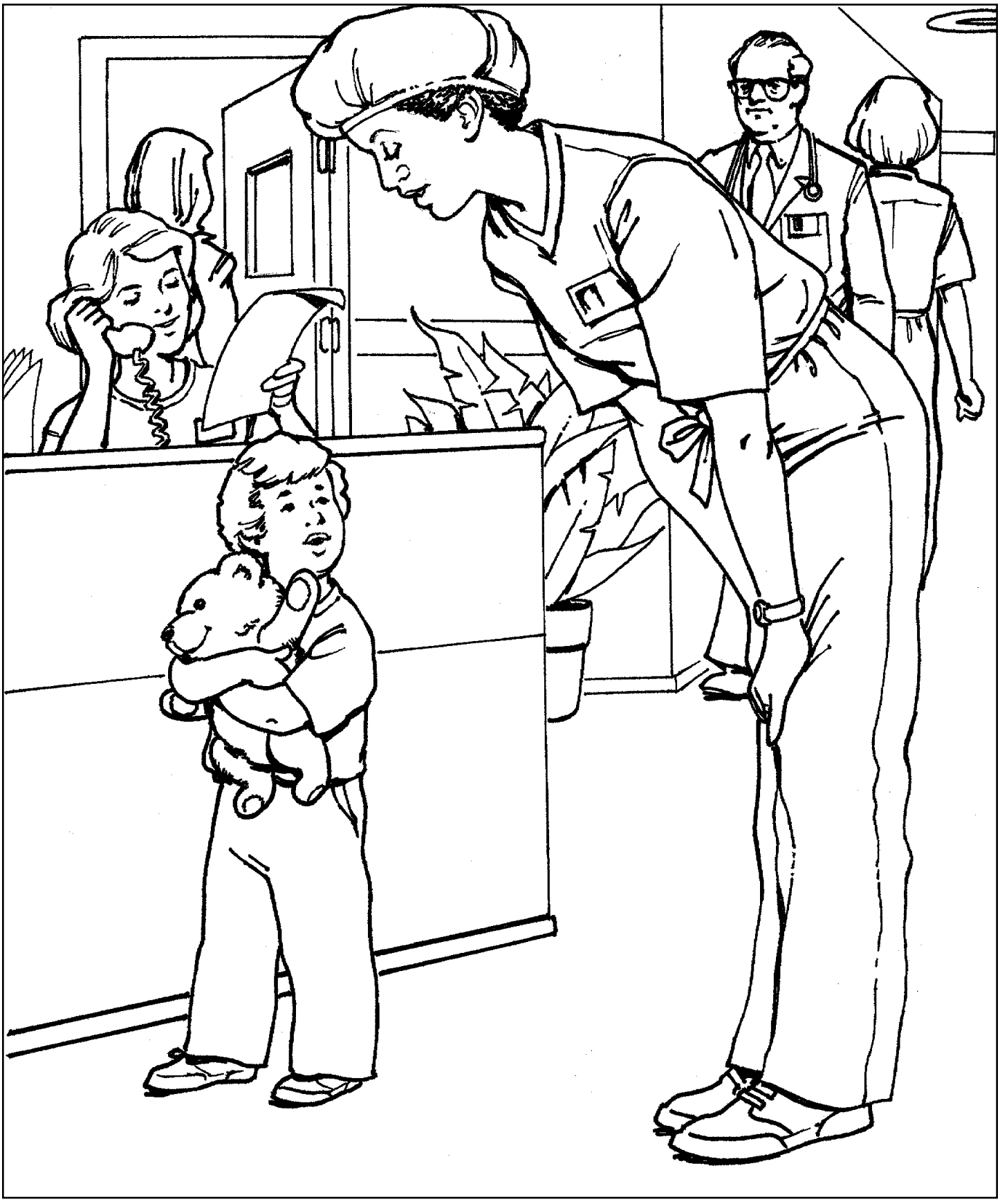
A lot of children need an operation or a special test for many different reasons. You may need one too. You also may need a special kind of medicine called an anesthetic so that the operation or test will not hurt you.



Sometimes when you have an operation or test, you must stay in the hospital for a few days.

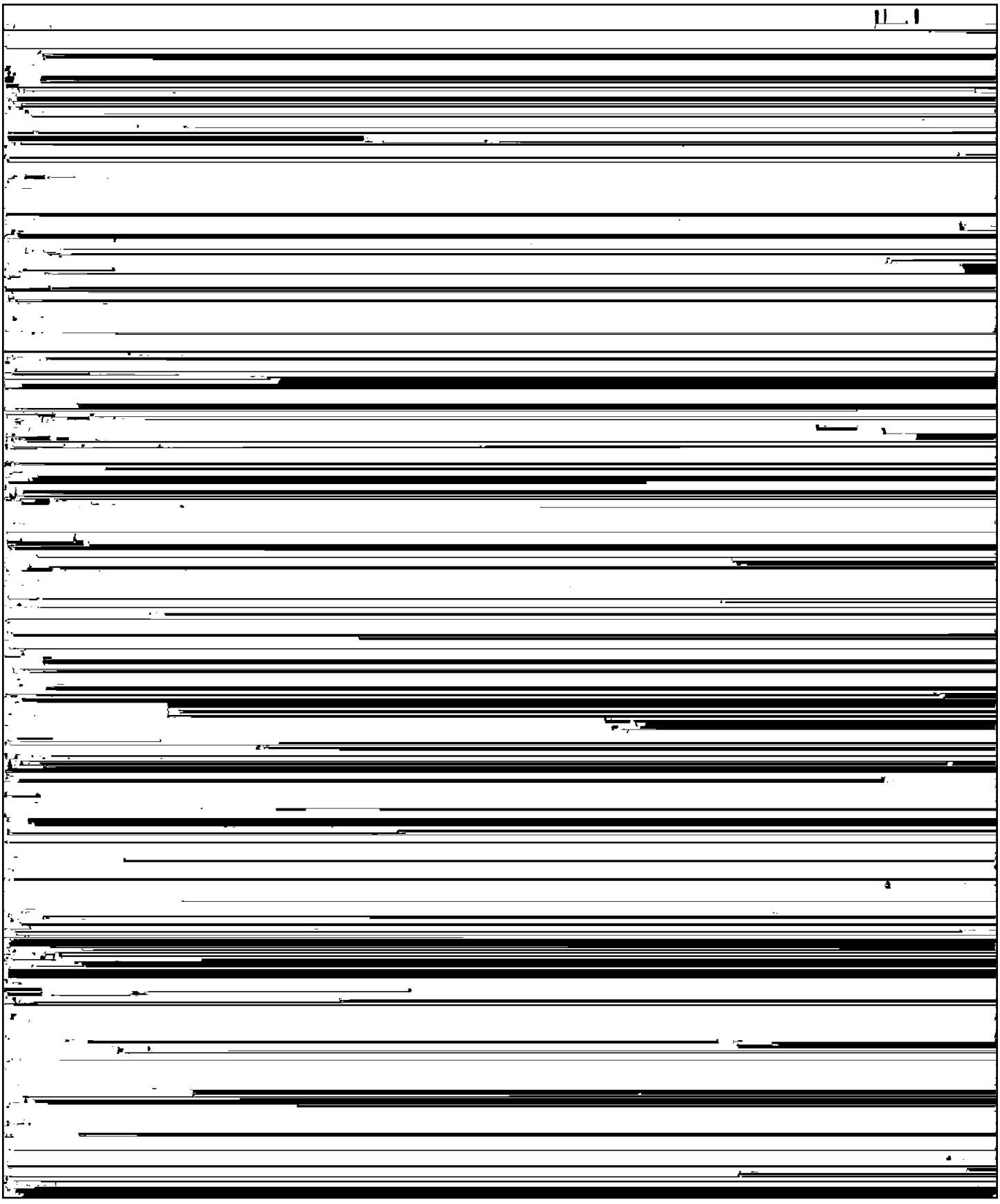


Sometimes you only need to be in a “little hospital” for an operation or test, and you can go home the same day. Often this little hospital is called an ambulatory surgery center. You will receive the same good care as if you were in the bigger hospital, except you won’t have to stay overnight.



The hospital is very clean and neat. It is a very busy place.

At the hospital you will find many friends: doctors, nurses and helpers.



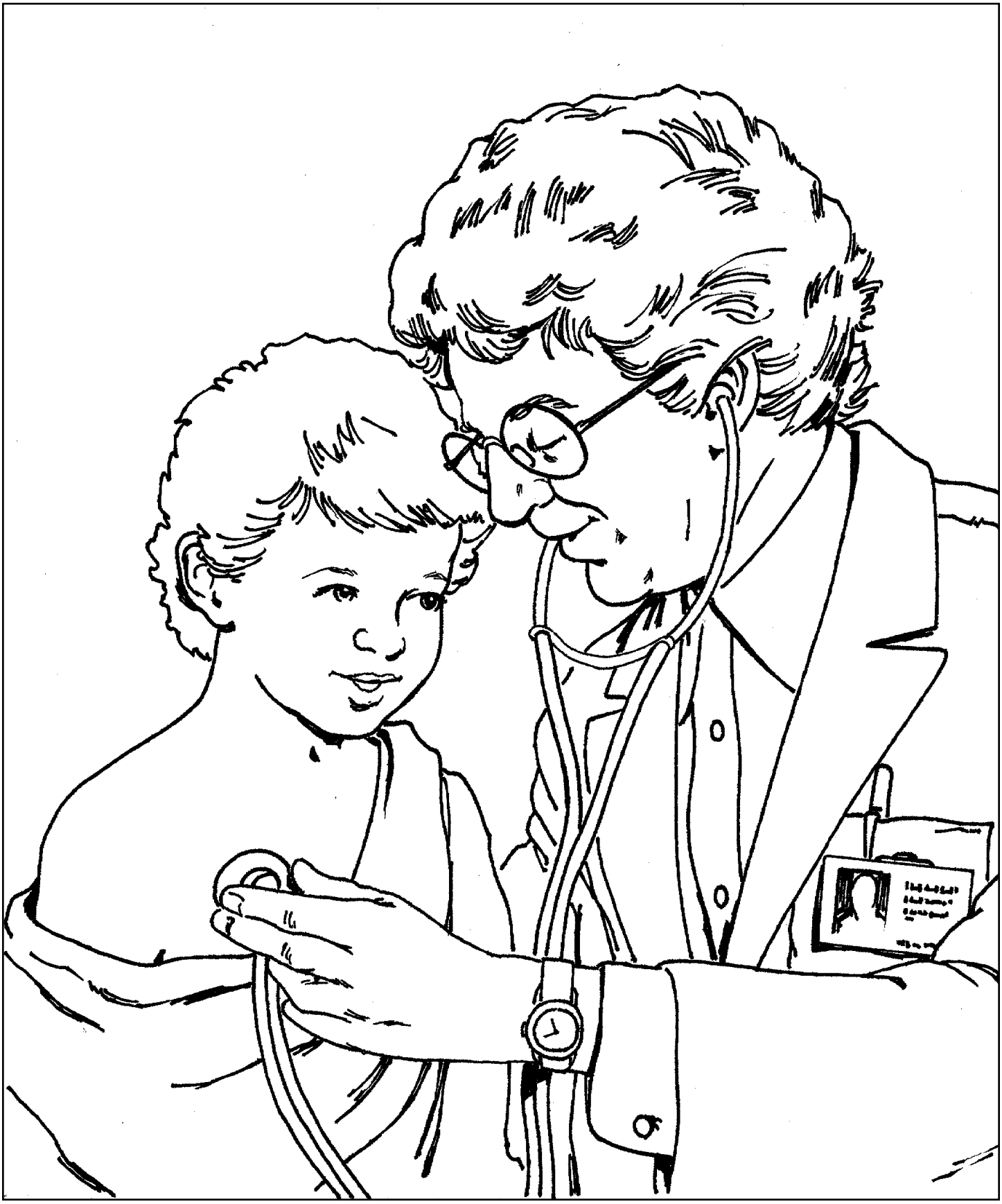
If you are staying in the hospital, you will have a room with your own bed. The bed will keep you comfortable and safe. You may even have a roommate and can make a new friend.

The doctors and nurses may need to take some tests to help take good care of you. If you have any questions, just ask.

Some tests are like having your picture taken. These are special pictures of the inside of your body.
The tests do not hurt and it is okay to smile when a picture is taken.

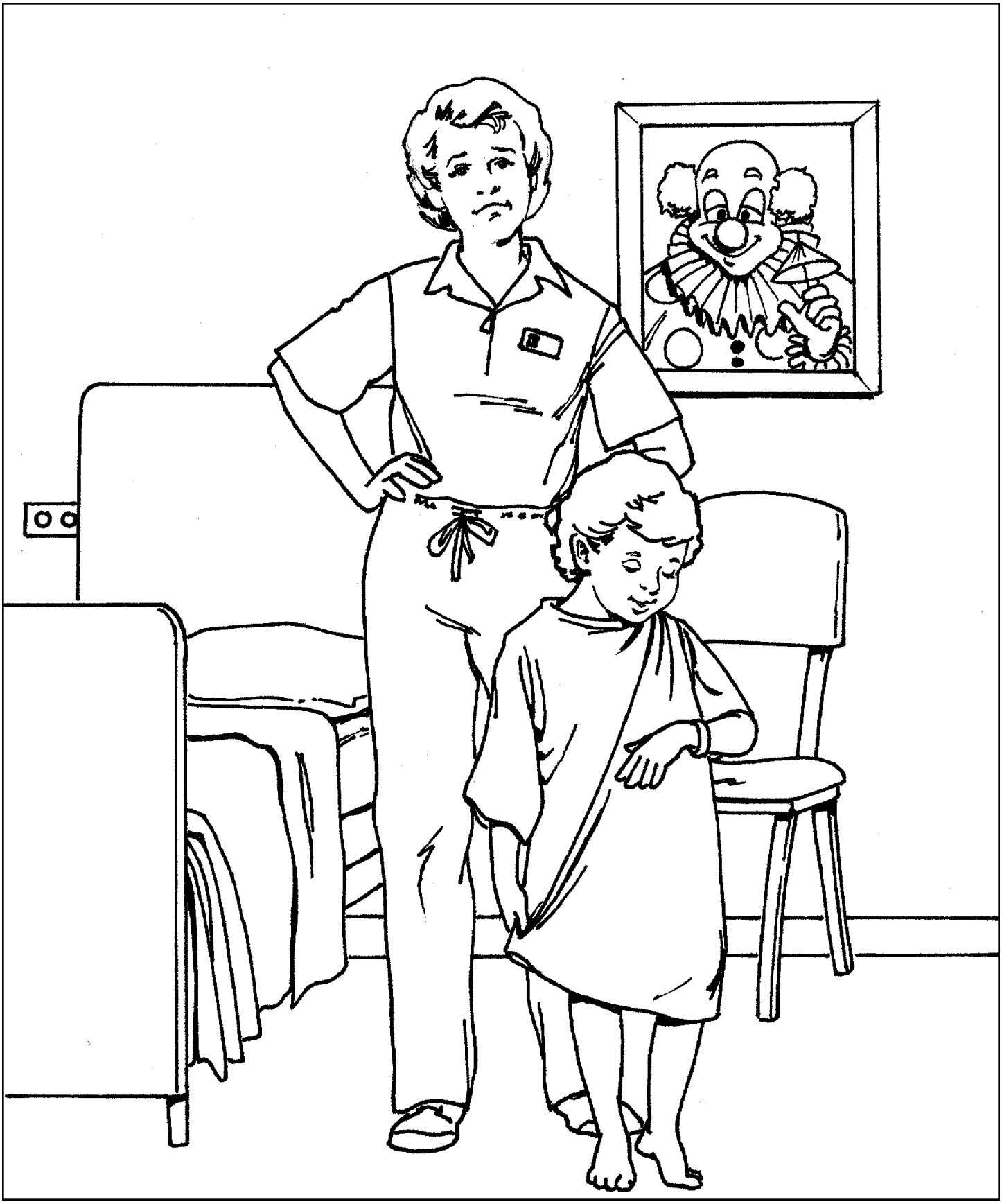
The blood pressure cuff lets the doctor or nurse measure how hard your heart is pumping. It feels tight around your arm, but it does not hurt.

Before you go to the operating room, you will meet a special doctor who watches over you and takes good care of you. This doctor is called an anesthesiologist (say it like “an-es-the-si-ol-o-gist”). The anesthesiologist will tell you about your anesthesia and ask your Mom and Dad some important questions.



The stethoscope lets the doctor listen to your heart and lungs. It may tickle when the doctor puts it on your chest.

If you stay overnight before your operation, you'll probably get to eat dinner in bed and watch TV. Be sure to eat all of your dinner because you will not get any breakfast in the morning before your operation.



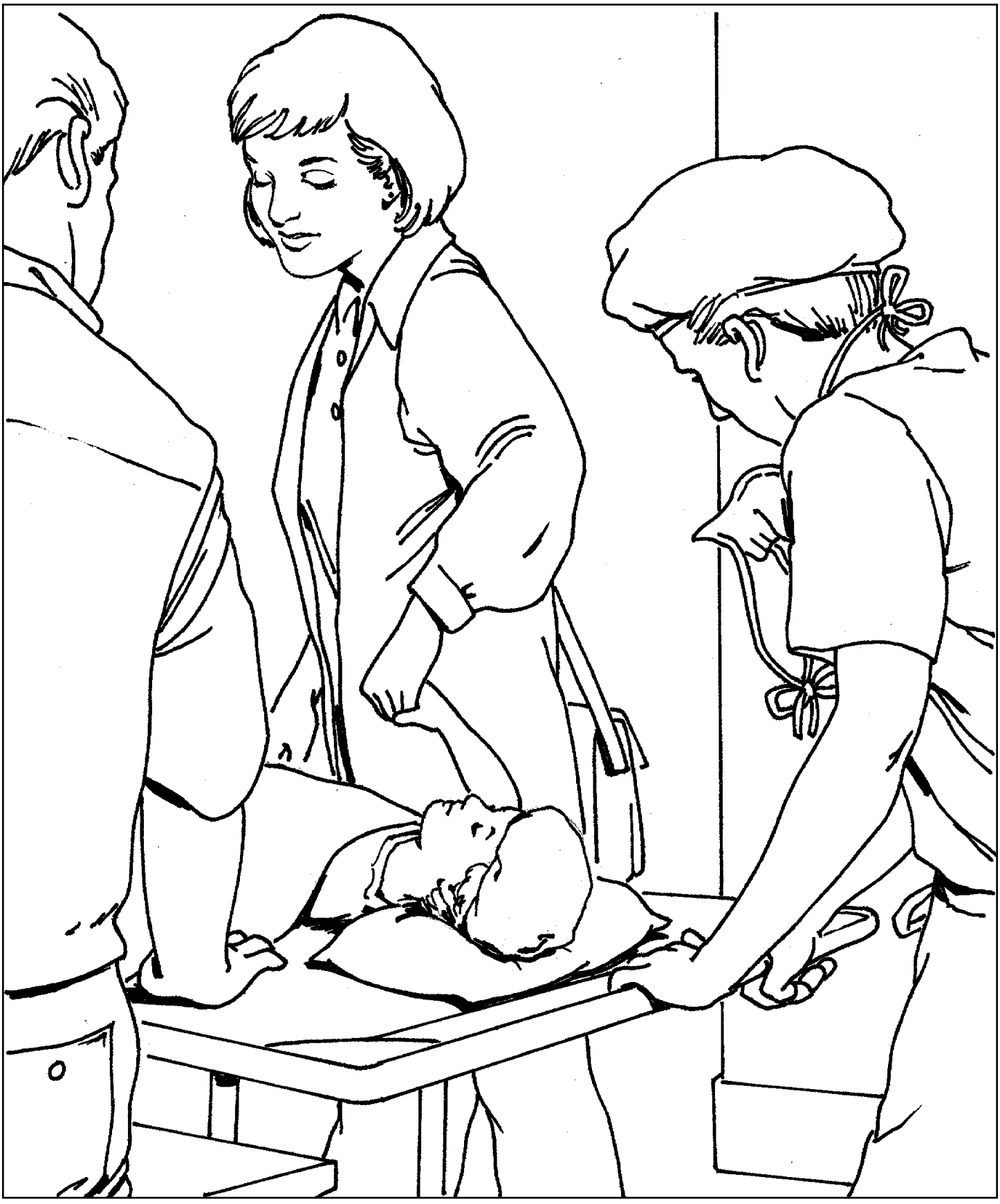
You will have special pajamas to wear at the hospital and a bracelet with your name on it.

While you are waiting to go to the operating room, you may get to play in a special room with other kids who are having operations and tests too!

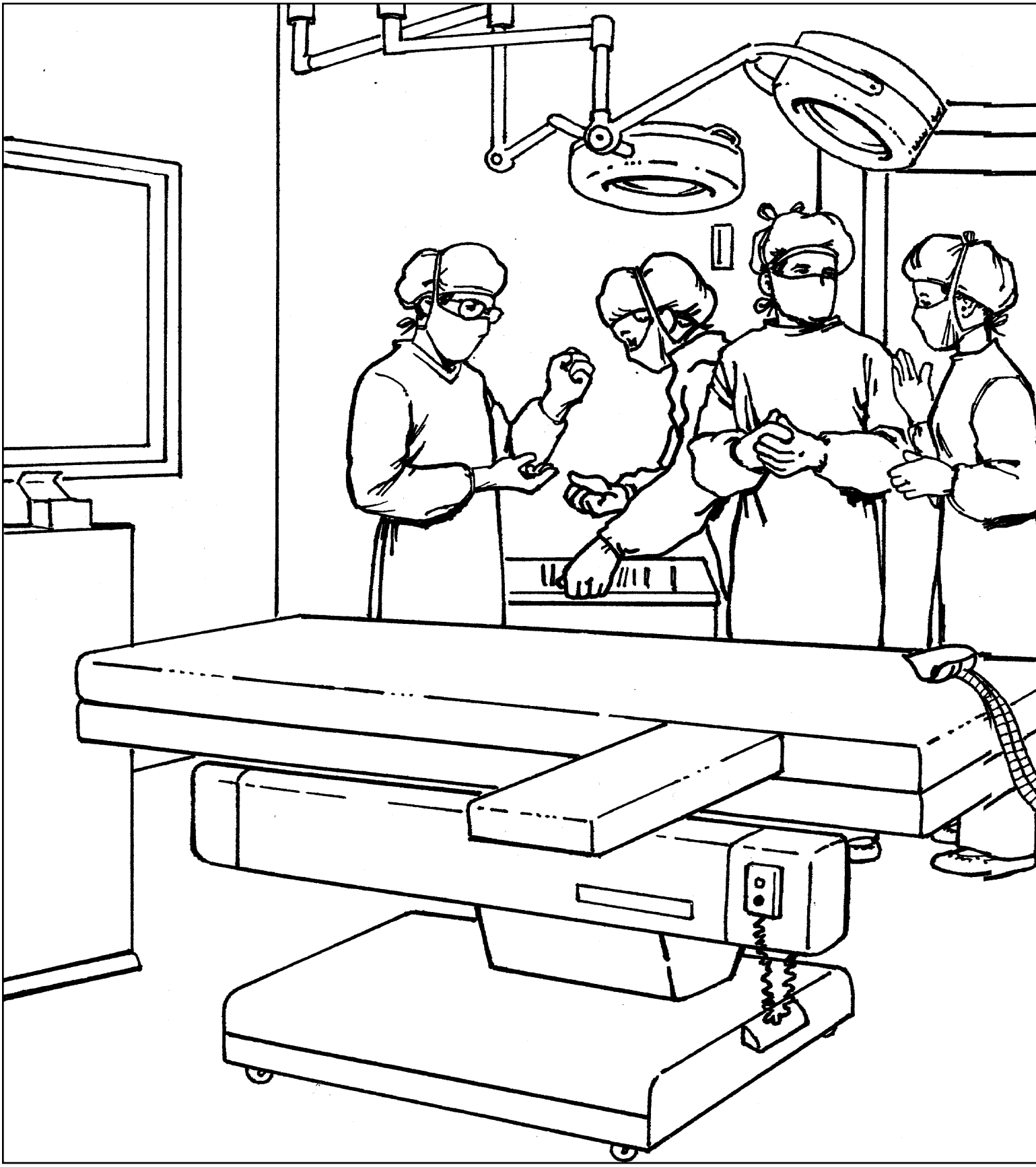
Before your operation, your hair may be covered with a cap just like the doctors and nurses wear. The funny shower cap will keep your hair neat and clean.

Before some kinds of operations or tests, you may take some medicine to make you sleepy.

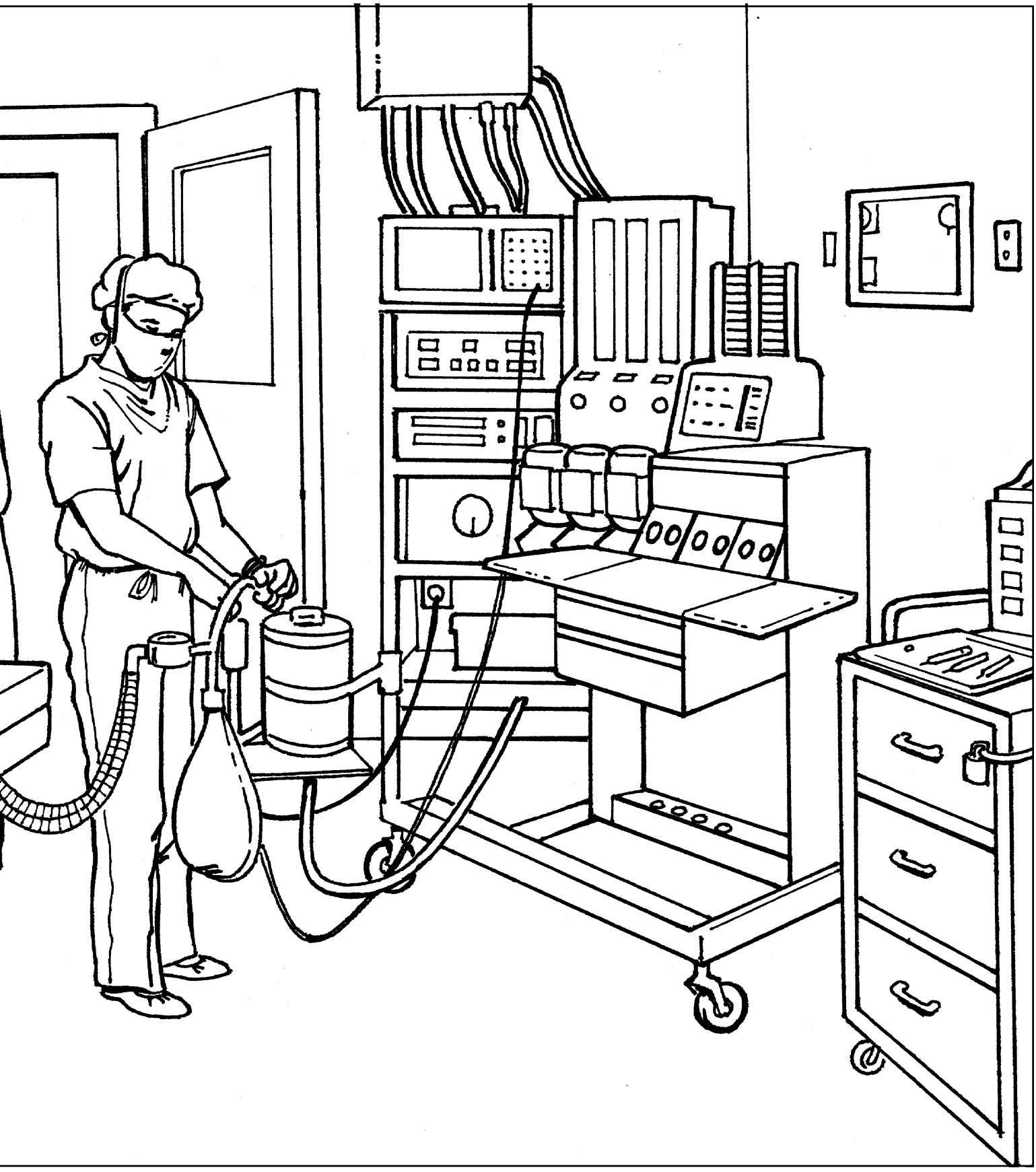
You may walk to the operating room with your anesthesiologist.



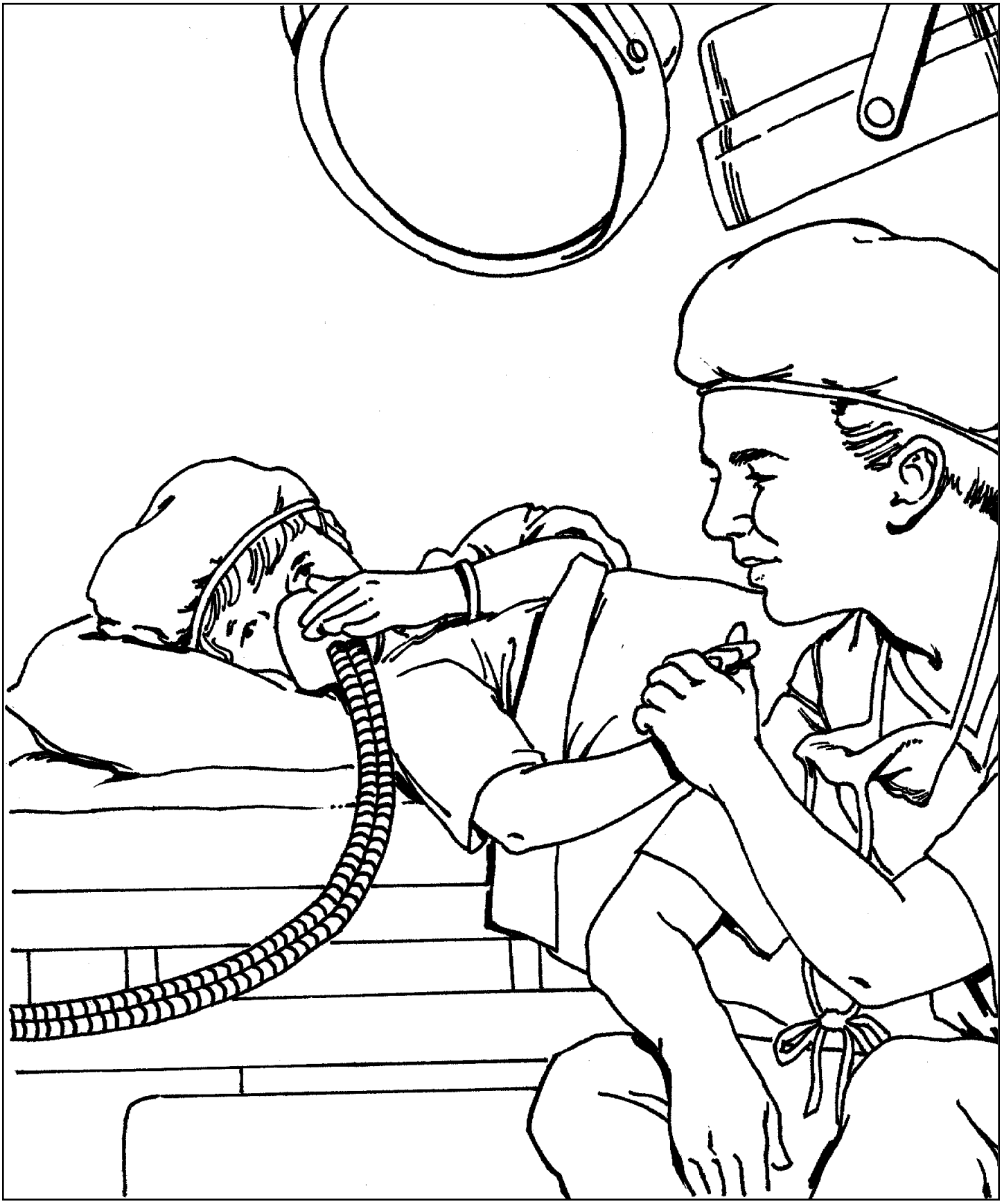
Or you may take a ride on a special bed to the operating room. Sometimes Mom or Dad may go with you. If they do not go along with you and the anesthesiologist, they will be waiting for you when your operation is done.



The operating room is very bright and clean and has a narrow bed for you to get onto. The room is filled with special machines to help the doctors and nurses take good care of you.



The doctors and nurses wear special clothes and masks to keep everything clean.



One of the doctors in the operating room is your good friend, the anesthesiologist. The anesthesiologist will give you anesthesia and may ask you to breath into a “space” mask that will make you feel funny for a few minutes like you’re dreaming. Then you take a kind of nap while your friend, the anesthesiologist, watches over you very carefully during your operation.

After your surgery is over, you'll wake up in the recovery room. A special nurse will be there to take care of you, and there may be other roommates who have had an operation in the room too. Your nurse may give you some medicine through a plastic tube, called an "IV," taped to your arm or foot.

After you wake up in the recovery room, you will go to a room where your Mom or Dad will be waiting for you. You may feel funny for a little while, and you may feel sore from the surgery. Tell the doctor or nurse if you are sore or don't feel right, and they will help you.

Soon you'll feel much better and will be able to go home.

When you get home, you may have to take it easy for a little while. Don't forget your operation will help you to be healthier!

Now, draw your picture … and don’t forget to smile!

AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF ANESTHESIOLOGISTS

520 N. Northwest Highway, Park Ridge, IL 60068-2573
Telephone: (847) 825-5586 **Fax:** (847) 825-5658 **E-mail:** mail@ASAhq.org