

A VISIT TO THE DOCTOR

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Skubba had not noticed that they were standing in front of the doctor's clinic. He had been thinking so hard about how to protect sharks that Fred had to stop and snap him out of it, or he would have probably walked straight into the front door. They pressed on the clinic's doorbell. The door responded and opened with a "beep". They stepped inside, into the waiting room. There was no one else there so it would not be long before it was their turn.

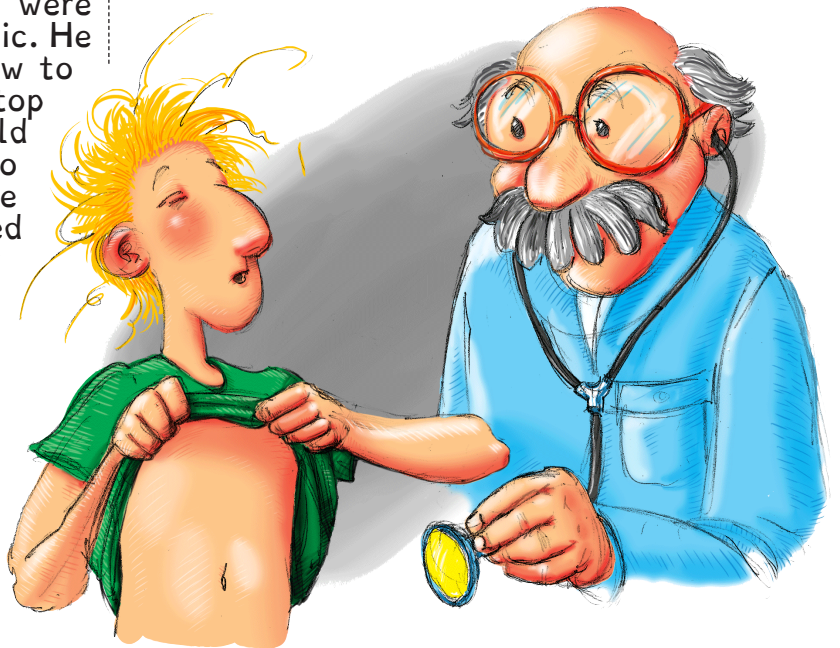
Fred had spent the previous evening trying to find out why Skubba had to see a doctor before he could dive. He did not find very much information out though. He also wanted to see what checks and tests the doctor was going to do. He had only understood that there would be something to do with the ears.

Skubba had told him that if he went to the bottom of the deep part of a pool, his ears would hurt a bit. In the pool they had told him that he had to pinch his nose and make his cheeks bulge. And that helped. While diving, the water pressed on the outside of the eardrums and that could only go away by pressing on the inside too. That pressure had to come from the air in the lungs to the ears via a tube.

"Tube? Is there a tube in our head?" Fred needed to know more about it. That tube even had a name: the Eustachian tube.

Fred always needed to know things and he didn't like waiting to find out. Skubba was not comfortable with it either, especially as Fred always had the answers to his questions, but today he had no answers to what Skubba really wanted to know. Why did he have to see a doctor? It was too late to get up and leave and without this visit, Skubba was not allowed to continue diving. He really wanted to learn to dive!

The time spent in the doctor's waiting room made them even more nervous. On one of the tables there was a selection of diving magazines so they started to



look through one to think about something else.

"See that big shark? What a beast!"; "What is that thing? Is that for diving?"; "You have to see this big lamp! It must give a lot of light!"

With all the magazine pictures to look at, they soon forgot all about their fear of the doctor's examination.

Then the door to the doctor's office opened. Someone came out and said goodbye. The doctor followed his patient out and came to the doorway and invited the boys in.

The doctor looked much friendlier than they had imagined. He did not wear a white apron like that of their school's doctor when they had their school medical check ups. Maybe there was nothing to be afraid of? There were no weird devices in the room. There was a hard bed with a large roll of kitchen paper over it, a large desk lamp and a scale on the floor. But other than that, the room did not look like a strange medical lab at all.

Their fear disappeared and gave way to curiosity and a little excitement. What would happen next?

And then the doctor spoke. "So, are you both youth divers?"