

Isabel's story

My Experience with Arthritis



I am writing this story to help kids understand what it's like to have Juvenile Arthritis and also for kids like me with this condition, to know that, in the end, it's all going to be ok.

Going to the hospital to see what was wrong with me



- This all started on the 10th of June 2021.
- We figured something was wrong with me when my right leg became extremely painful and I had a high temperature.
- I went to hospital so the doctors could investigate.



Lots of scans and tests

I had a Butterfly cannula put in my hand so the doctors could do lots of blood tests.

I also had lots of scans...

- X-rays
- MRI scan
- Ultrasound scans
- Bone scans



This is me getting a bone scan.

I was worried at first...



- At first I was pretty worried about going to hospital.
- I had to stay very still for some scans.
- But it wasn't as scary as I had thought it would be.
- If you ever have to go to hospital, don't worry too much, I know the doctors will take good care of you.



Hospital is not all bad...



- You can pretend to drive your bed all over the hospital!



- You can build lego with your parents!



- If you have to stay overnight, you don't have to pack your own dinner!

The hospital also has a cafe!

So what is my condition?

After **ALL** that time in hospital the doctors finally figured out what was wrong with me!

I have a condition called Systemic Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis or SJIA for short.

Words...	It means...	How to pronounce...
Systemic	I have it everywhere in my body	Si - stem - ick
Juvenile	A kid / child who has it	Ju - ven - eye - ull
Idiopathic	No explanation of why I got it	Ee - dee - oh - pah - thick
Arthritis	Sometimes my joints hurt	Are - thr - eye - tiss

How do I treat my SJIA?

- I am treating my condition by taking special medication called steroids.
- Steroids help my body to cope with the pain in my joints.
- Unfortunately, they also have something called side effects.

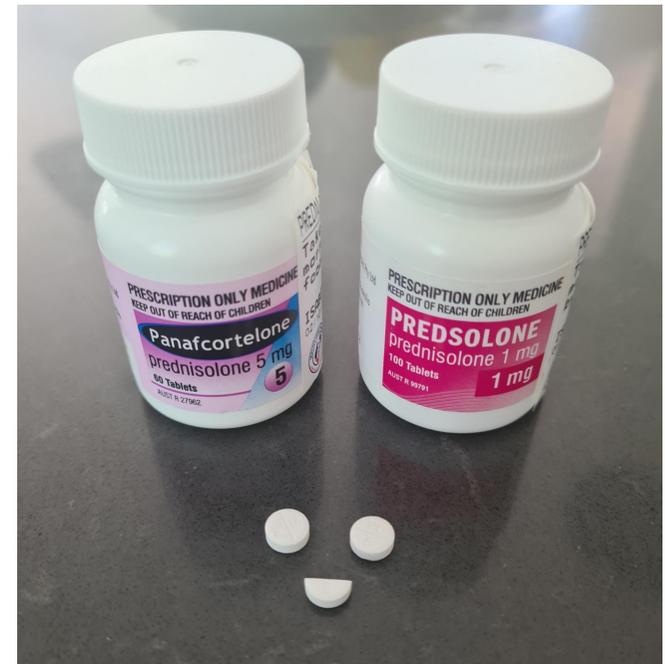
These include:

- Bloating
- Moon face (this means my face gets round - not an actual moon)
- Weight gain
- Mood swings (sometimes I can get grumpy)
- More hair growth
- Increased appetite (I'm **SOOO** hungry all the time)



Handling my steroids

- As we are gradually lowering my steroids, my body has to work harder than usual to cope with the pain in my joints.
- Because my body is working so much harder, I will often be tired in the afternoons.
- Depending on how my body reacts to reducing the steroids, I may need to move to a different medication in the future.



These are my steroids

So, how can you help me?

Well you can help me by...

- Trying **NOT** to pull on my arms.
- Being **gentle** and **kind** with me.
- Being **understanding** that sometimes I may be a bit grumpy when my eyes hurt and my body feels stiff.
- Being **understanding** that I may feel tired in the afternoons.

If you have any other ideas of how you can help me, I would love to hear them!



More information

If you are interested in learning more about different types of Juvenile Arthritis you can visit the following websites:

- My doctor Dr Jeffrey Chaitow
<https://www.jeffchaitowpractice.com.au/juvenile-idiopathic-arthritis>
- Juvenile Arthritis Foundation Australia
<https://www.jafa.org.au/about-juvenile-arthritis>

I may have some challenges living with SJIA...



but I am determined to still have fun and live a perfectly, normal life.