

A health science book for primary school children

# The Health Choices Book:

## Learning to think carefully about treatments



Informed Health Choices

Title	The Health Choices Book: Learning to think carefully about treatments. A health science book for primary school children
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Norwegian Institute of Public Health



The Research Council  
of Norway

## John and Julie learn about CHOICES of treatments

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# 8

## Advantages and disadvantages of a treatment

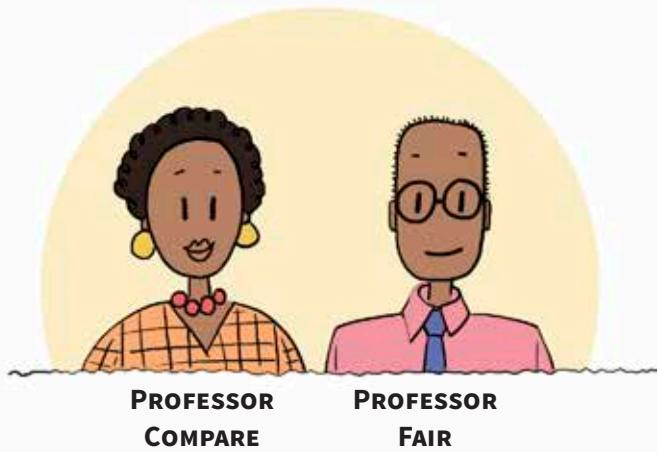
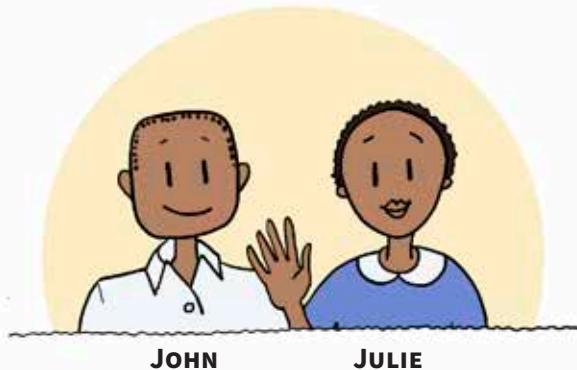
### What you will learn in this lesson:

1. What an “advantage” of a treatment is
2. What a “disadvantage” of a treatment is
3. What an “informed choice” is
4. Why it is important to make informed choices of treatments
5. How to make informed choices of treatments

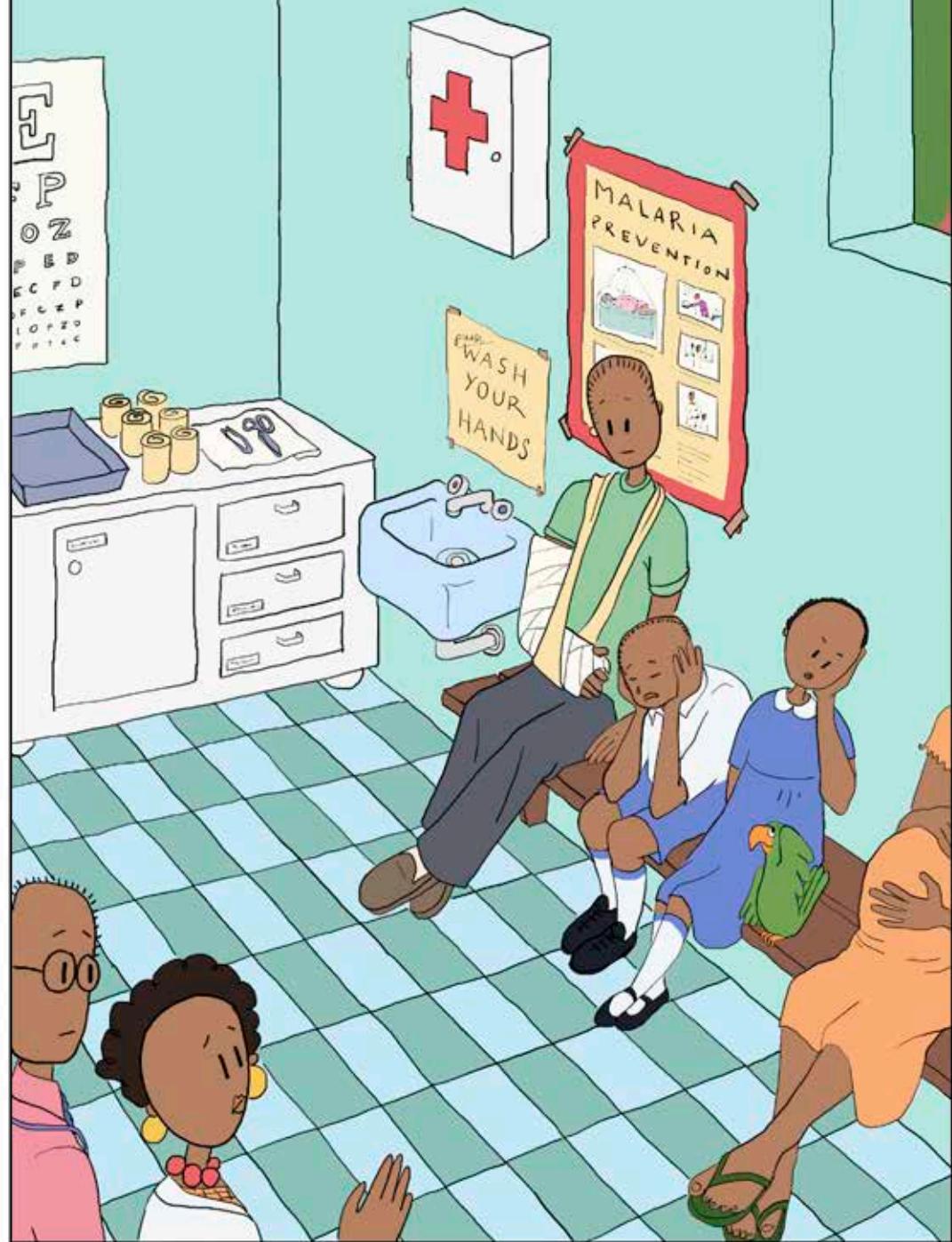
### Keywords for this lesson:

- An **INFORMED** choice is a choice made when you understand the information that you have.
- An **ADVANTAGE** of a treatment is something about a treatment that you think is good.
- A **DISADVANTAGE** of a treatment is something about a treatment that you think is bad.

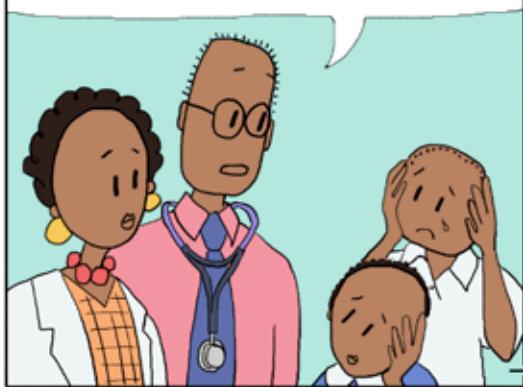
## People in this lesson



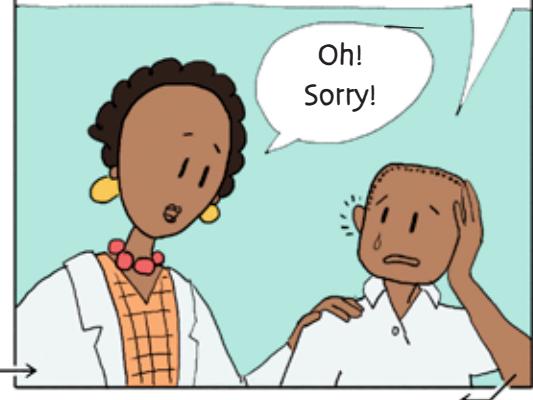
## THE CLINIC



Good afternoon, John and Julie.  
Is everything ok?



No! We both have ear infections...



There are different treatments that you could use for your infections.



Many times, people choose to do nothing and their infections go away without any medicine.



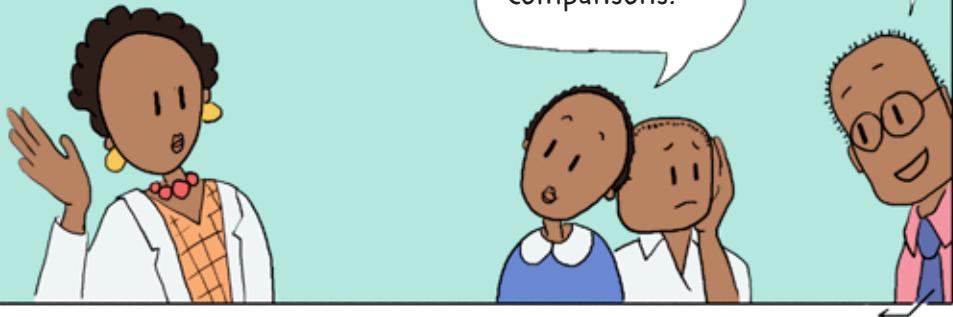
Sometimes, doctors give people an antibiotic for their infections. An antibiotic is a type of medicine!



When you choose whether to use a treatment, you should understand the information that you have about the treatment.

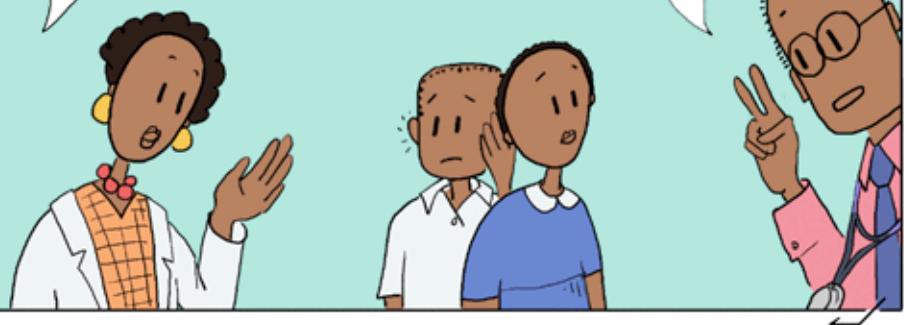
Like what health researchers have found in fair comparisons!

Yes!  
Exactly!



When you understand the information that you have and make a choice, it is called making an informed choice.

To make an informed choice about a treatment, you should ask two important questions!



**INFORMATION** *about treatments* is what we are told or learn about treatments.

*IN LUGANDA:* “Obubaka ku by’obujjanjabi”

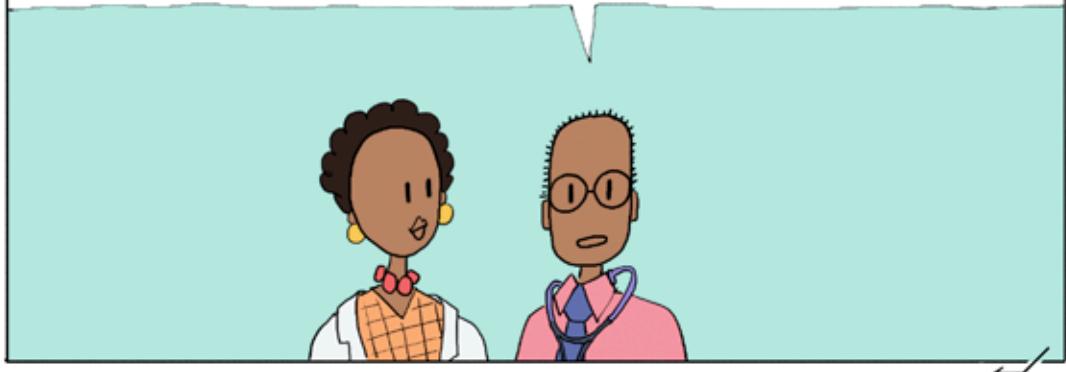
*IN KISWAHILI:* “Ambukizo” au “Amakuru”

An **INFORMED** *choice* is a choice made when you understand the information that you have.

*IN LUGANDA:* “Okusalawo okukolebwa nga omuntu asoose kutegeera ensonga zonna ezikwata ku ky’asalawo”

*IN KISWAHILI:* “Ambukizo”

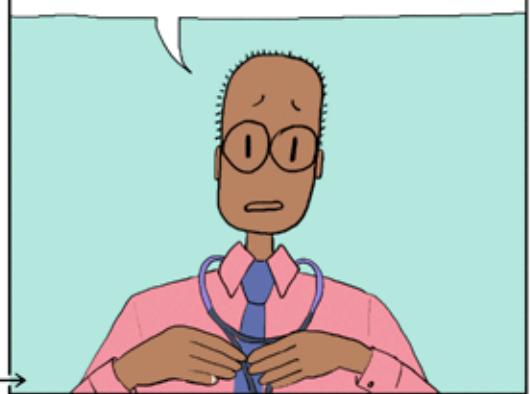
First you should ask:  
What are the **advantages** and **disadvantages** of the treatment?



The advantages are what you think  
is good about the treatment.



The disadvantages are what  
you think is bad.



An **ADVANTAGE** of a treatment  
is something about a treatment  
that you think is good.

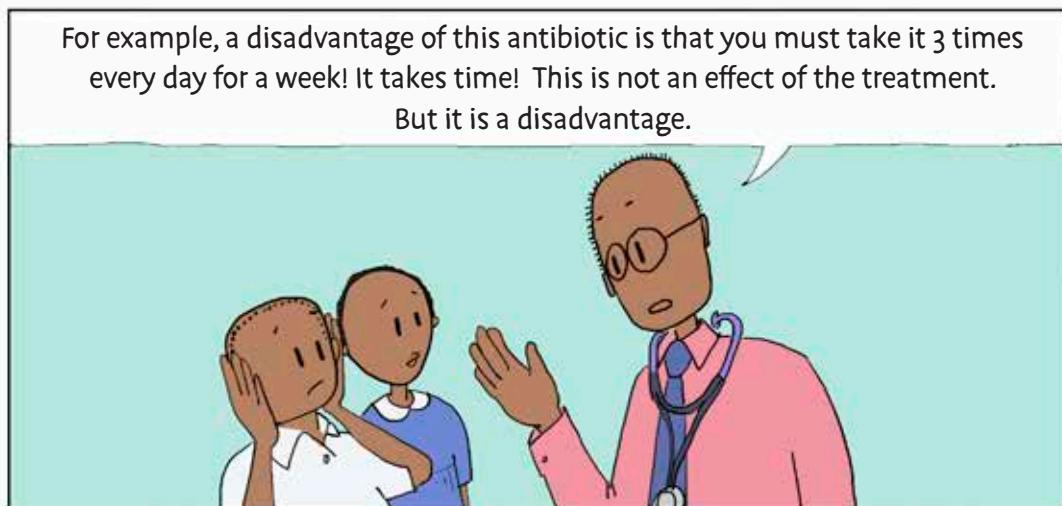
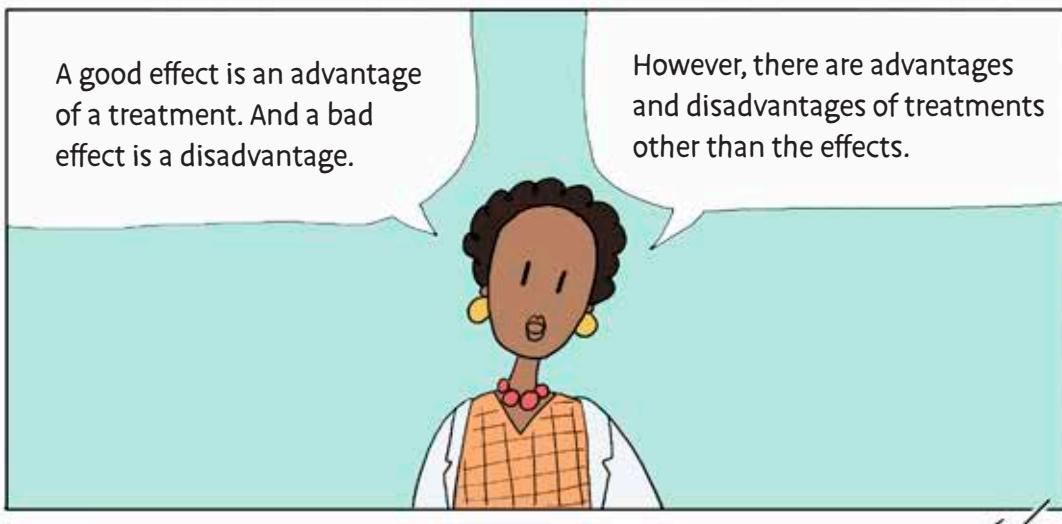
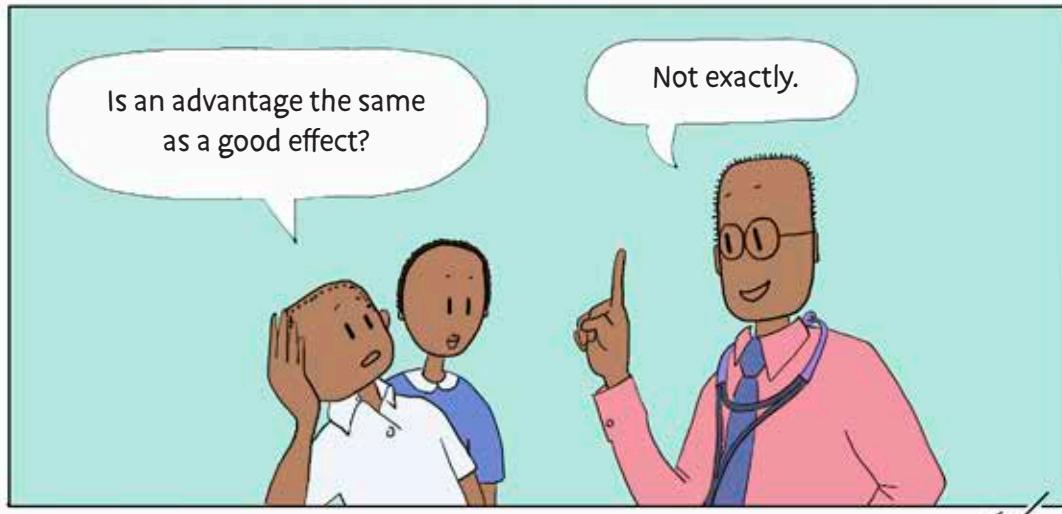
*IN LUGANDA:* “Ekirungi ku bujjanja-  
bi obumu oba obulala”

*IN KISWAHILI:* “Manufaa”

A **DISADVANTAGE** of a treatment  
is something about a treatment  
that you think is bad.

*IN LUGANDA:* “Ekitali kirungi ku  
bujjanjabi obumu oba obulala” oba  
“Ekibi ku bujjanjabi obumu oba  
obulala”

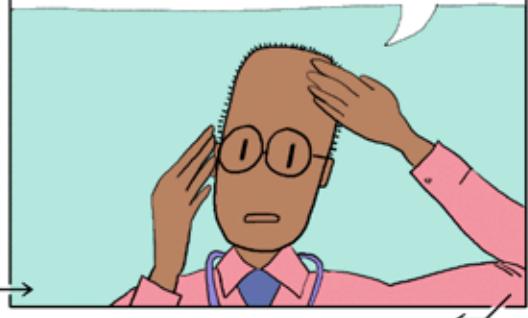
*IN KISWAHILI:* “Kwa madhara”



The most important advantage of the antibiotic is that it sometimes makes an infection go away faster.



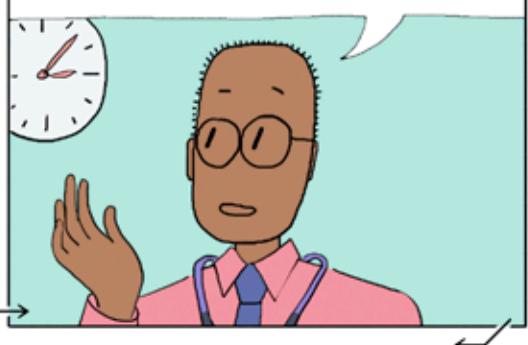
If the infection goes away, the pain and fever go away!



However, most times, the infection will go away without any medicine.



Sometimes it takes longer for the infection to go away without medicine. But sometimes it takes the same amount of time!



An important disadvantage of the antibiotic is that it sometimes makes you sick. It can make you vomit or give you diarrhea.



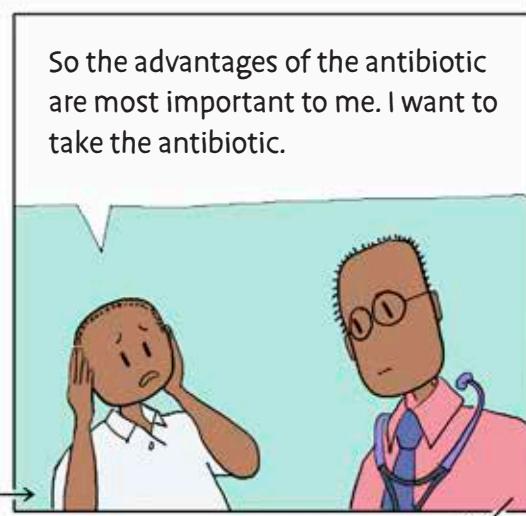
Finally, you should ask what is most important to you.



My ear infection is very painful and I have a fever.



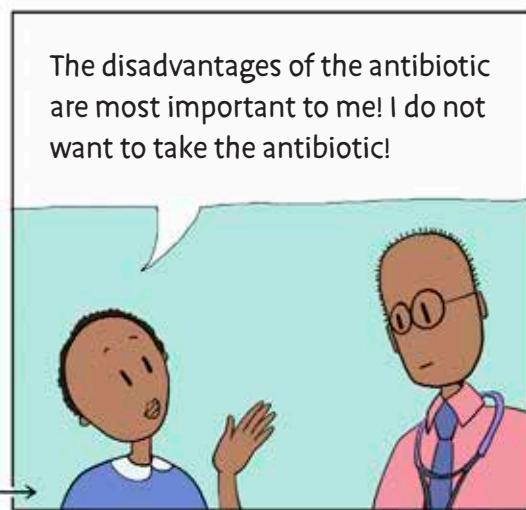
So the advantages of the antibiotic are most important to me. I want to take the antibiotic.



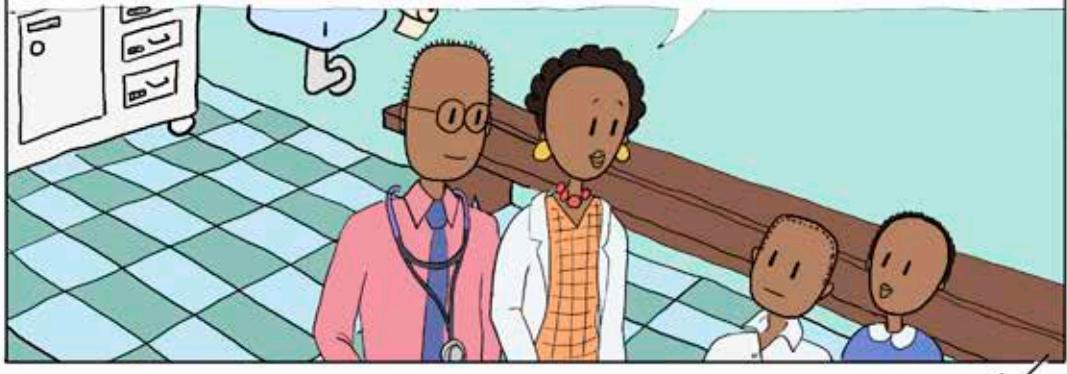
I do not want to get sick! And my infection is not so painful!



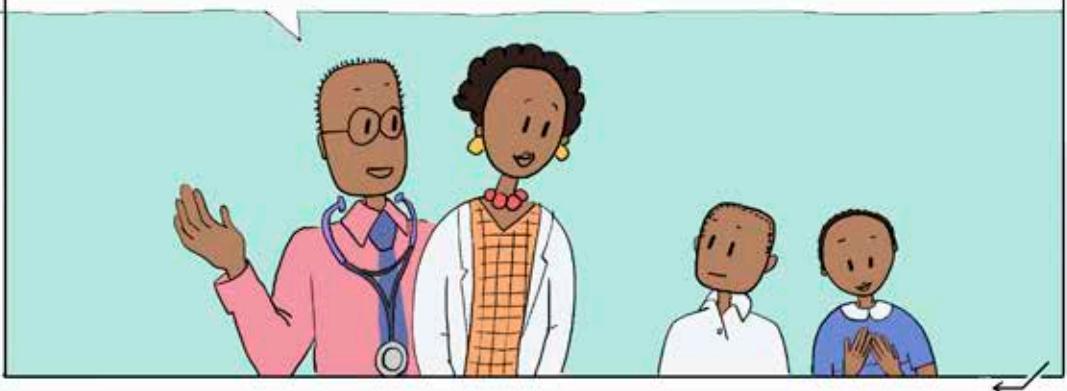
The disadvantages of the antibiotic are most important to me! I do not want to take the antibiotic!



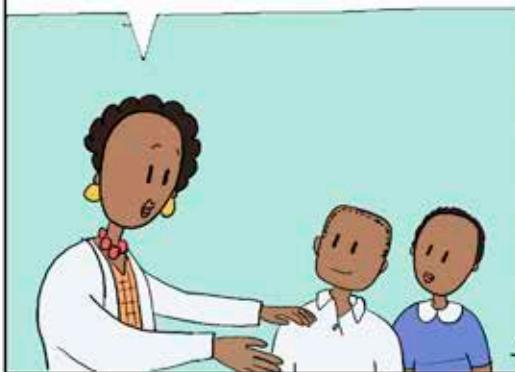
So you see, John and Julie, when people make informed choices like you are now, there is no right choice for everyone...



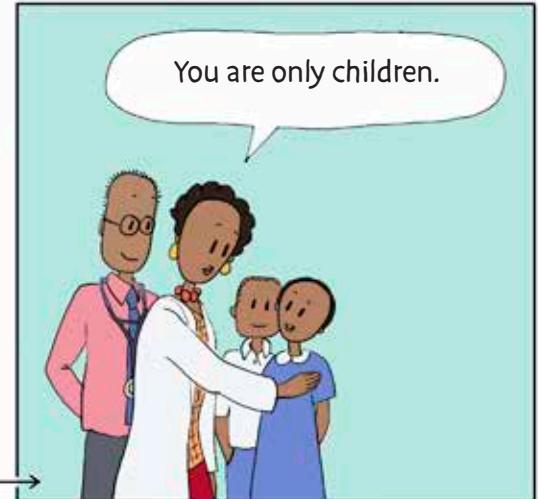
There is only the right choice for each person! What is most important to one person is not always the same as what is most important to another person.



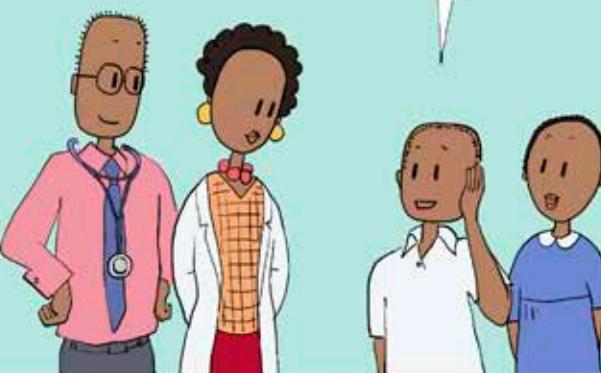
But John, before you take the antibiotic, first ask your mother about it.



You are only children.

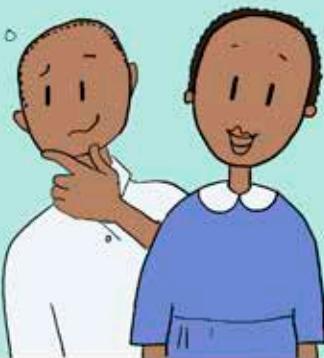


Thank you for teaching us so many important lessons, Professors.

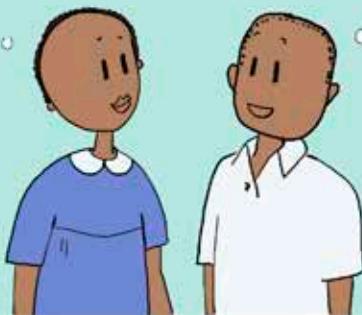


From now on, we will think carefully about treatments.

We will ask questions about what people say.

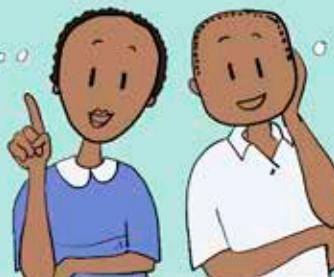


And we will make informed choices for ourselves.



Now we understand why it is so important for health researchers to compare...

And be fair!



COMPARE! BE FAIR!



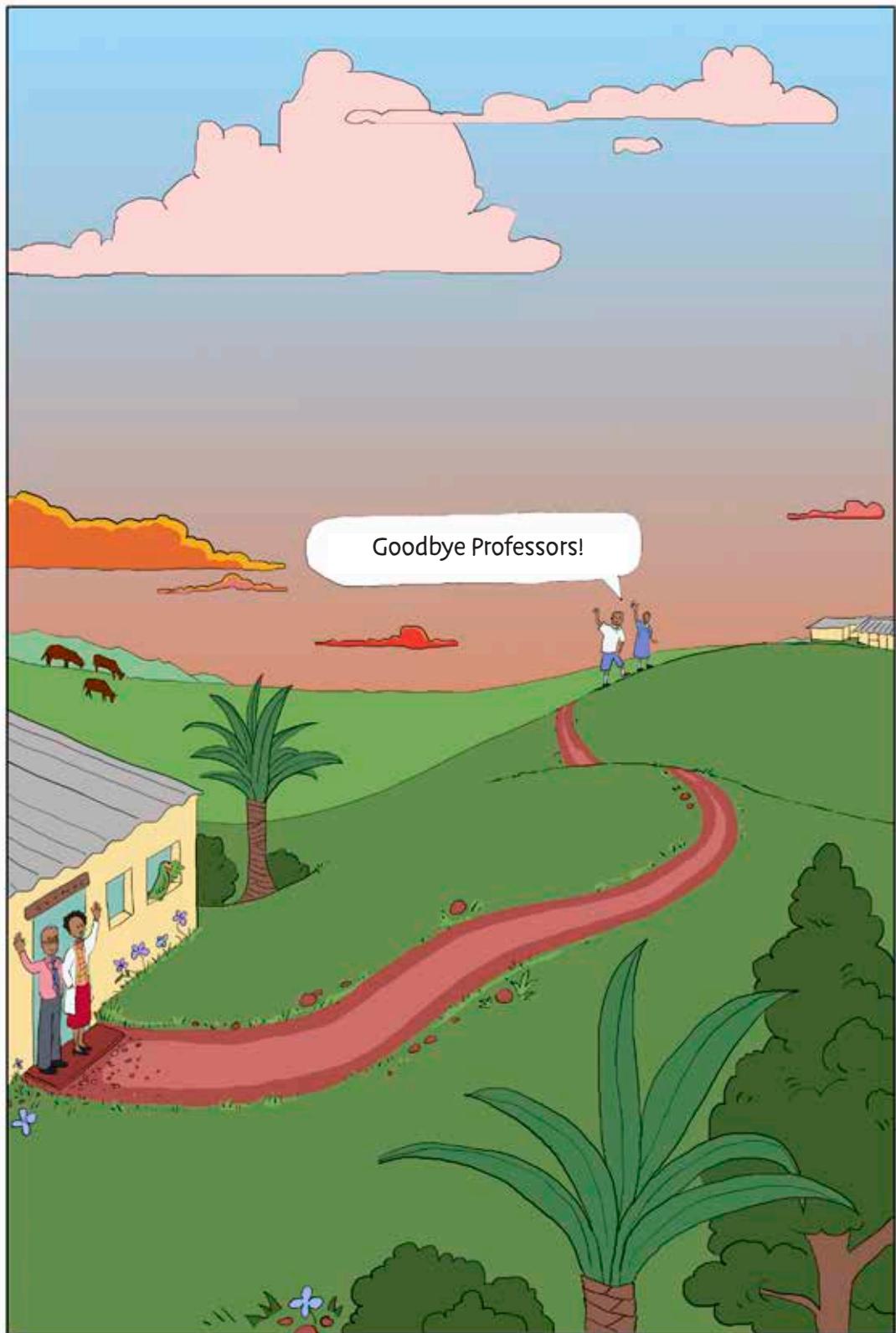
Even Kasuku has learned!



There are still many more important lessons for you to learn.

We will teach you when you are a little older.





### EXTRA EXAMPLE

These are extra examples of what you learned in the chapter.

#### **Extra example of two people making different choices because of what is most important to each of them.**

##### **Treatment A:**

Getting surgery for a broken bone

*Advantage:* Can make the bone heal faster

*Disadvantage:* Costs a lot of money and you can get an infection

##### **Treatment B:**

Not getting surgery for a broken bone

*Advantage:* Does not cost anything

*Nelson's choice:* Nelson chooses to get the surgery because he is a basketball player and it is most important to him that he can play again soon.

*Rhona's choice:* Rhona chooses not to get the surgery because she would rather wait and save the money, and she does not want to take the chance of getting an infection.

**ACTIVITY**

## Instructions



**Objective:** Imagine making the right choice for yourself by thinking carefully about the advantages and disadvantages.

The advantages and disadvantages are listed on the next page.

**Step 1:** The children imagine they have a painful ear infection like John has in the story.

**Step 2:** Led by the teacher, children discuss which advantage or which disadvantage of each treatment is most important to each of them.

Remember, most treatments have good and bad effects.

**Step 3:** The teacher reads all of the advantages and disadvantages.

**Step 4:** The children raise their hand when the teacher says the advantage or disadvantage that would be most important to them if they had an ear infection like John's.

**Step 5:** The children discuss with the other children on their bench which treatment they would use and why.

*More instructions →*

**ACTIVITY**



*Step 6:* The teacher asks who would choose to use the antibiotic.

*Step 7:* Children who would use the antibiotic stand up.

*Step 8:* All children sit down.

*Step 9:* The teacher asks who would not use the antibiotic.

*Step 10:* Children who would not use the antibiotic stand up.

*Step 11:* All children sit down.

*Step 12:* The children imagine that they have a less painful ear infection like the one Julie has in the story.

*Step 13:* Repeat steps 6 to 11.

*More instructions →*

**ACTIVITY**



## Treatment 1: Taking an antibiotic

### **Advantages of taking the antibiotic:**

- It sometimes makes pain and fever from an infection go away faster.

### **Disadvantages of taking the antibiotic:**

- It sometimes gives people diarrhoea or makes them vomit.
- It tastes bad.
- You must take it several times each day for several days.
- It costs some money.

## Treatment 2: Not taking an antibiotic

### **Advantages of not taking the antibiotic:**

- It does not give people diarrhea or make them vomit.

### **Disadvantages of not taking the antibiotic:**

- It will not make the pain or fever go away faster.

### **EXERCISE 1**

Write what the words mean. Remember that the meanings of the words are in the back of the book.

**Example:**

What is a “fair” comparison of treatments?

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A comparison where the only important difference is the treatments.

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1. What is an “informed choice”?

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2. What is an “advantage” of a treatment?

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3. What is a “disadvantage” of a treatment?

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## EXERCISE 2

Tick whether each point is true or false.

**Example:**

If a comparison is big enough, it is not important whether it is fair.

True  False

1. Costing a lot of money is an advantage of a treatment.

True  False

2. A good effect is an advantage of a treatment.

True  False

3. When two people make informed choices that means they are making the same choice.

True  False

4. An advantage to one person can be a disadvantage to another person.

True  False

5. Disadvantages of a treatment are always more important than the advantages.

True  False