

LET'S LEARN ABOUT AD.

TEEN AD EXPLAINER (12-17 years old)



WHAT IS AD?

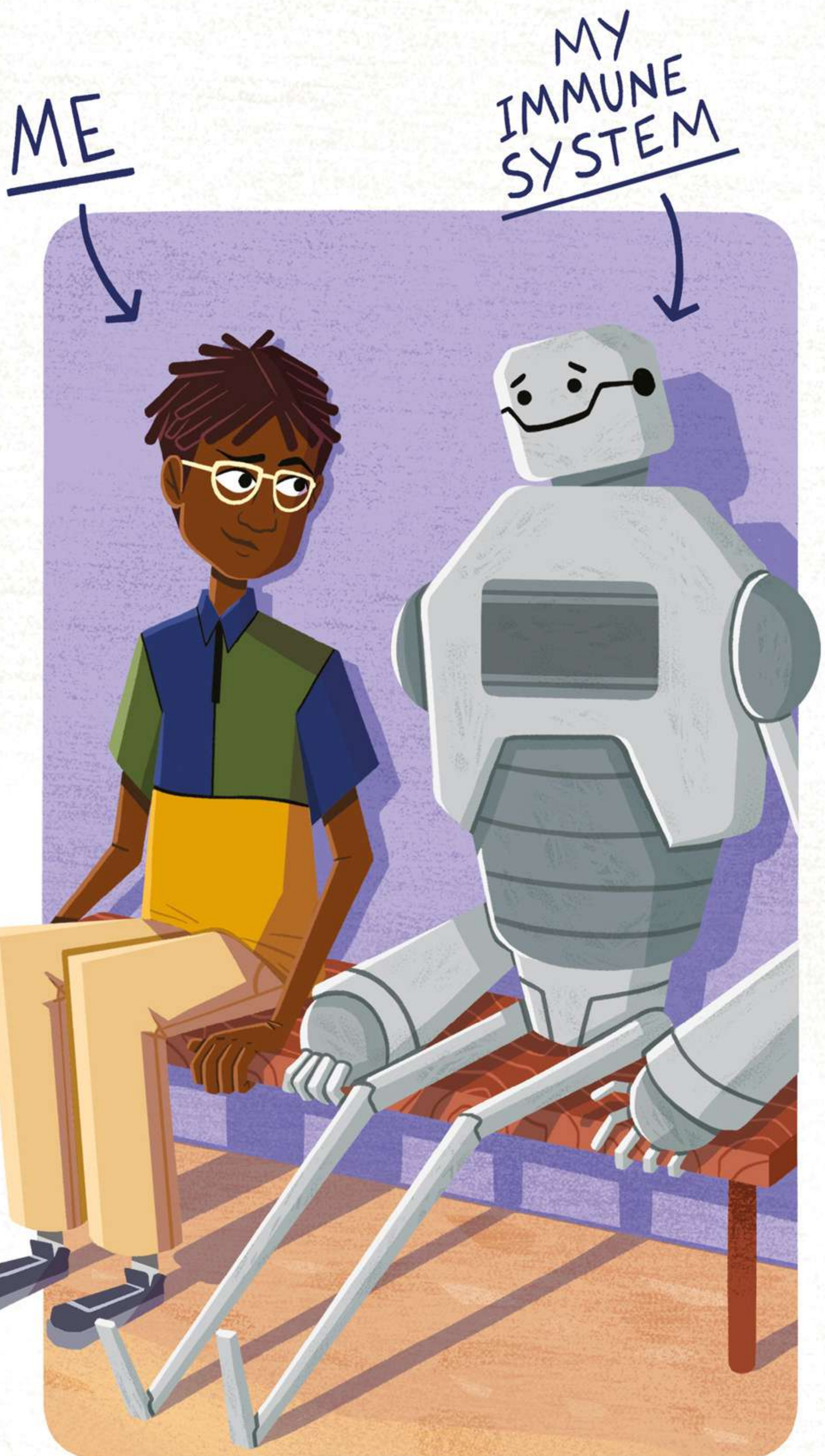
Hey there, I'm Eric. I heard you've got atopic dermatitis, just like me.

You might hear some people call it 'eczema' but I call it "AD". However you want to call it, we're in the same boat.

I've had AD for as long as I can remember, and I just turned 14, so I know a thing or two about how it works. Plus, I'm really good at science, so I can help you learn the basics.

Eczema is a term for a group of itchy skin conditions.^{1,2} AD is actually the most common type of eczema, and it's caused by a few things.^{1,2} That includes the environment, our genetics, and our immune system.³

To make things simple, I think of my immune system as a personal guardian, just like this robot.





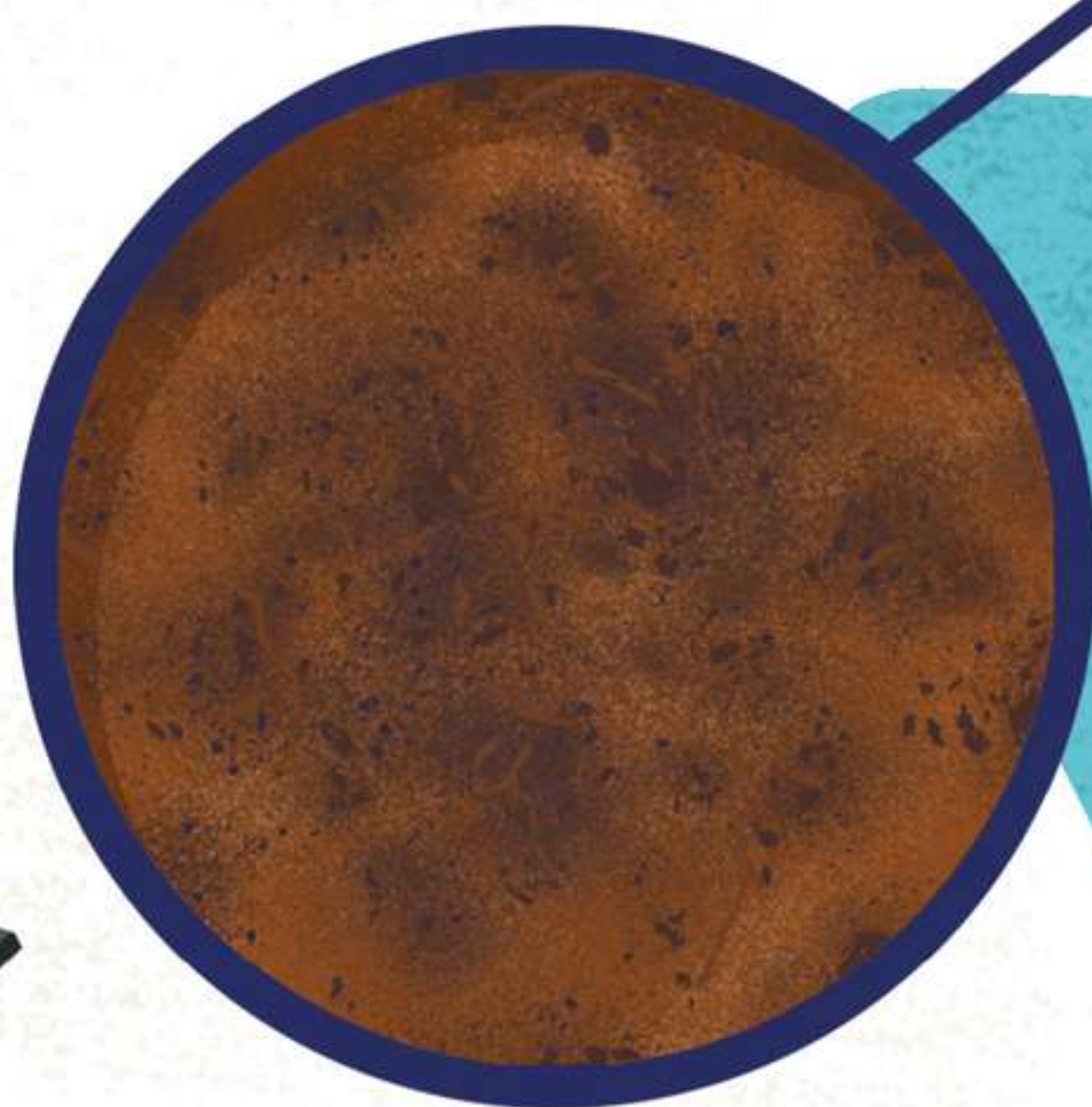
Everyone has an immune system that's supposed to protect us from viruses and bacteria.⁴ But in people with AD, the immune system works a little differently.

Ours can be over-active towards certain things.⁵ Thanks to AD, our skin can look a little different.^{5,6} It might make you feel self-conscious, I get that too.⁷ But we shouldn't have to feel ashamed about the way our skin looks.

AD damages your skin, making it feel dry and itchy, with red or purple rashes.⁶ That itchiness distracts me at times, which really gets on my nerves, especially when I'm trying to get stuck into my science lessons.

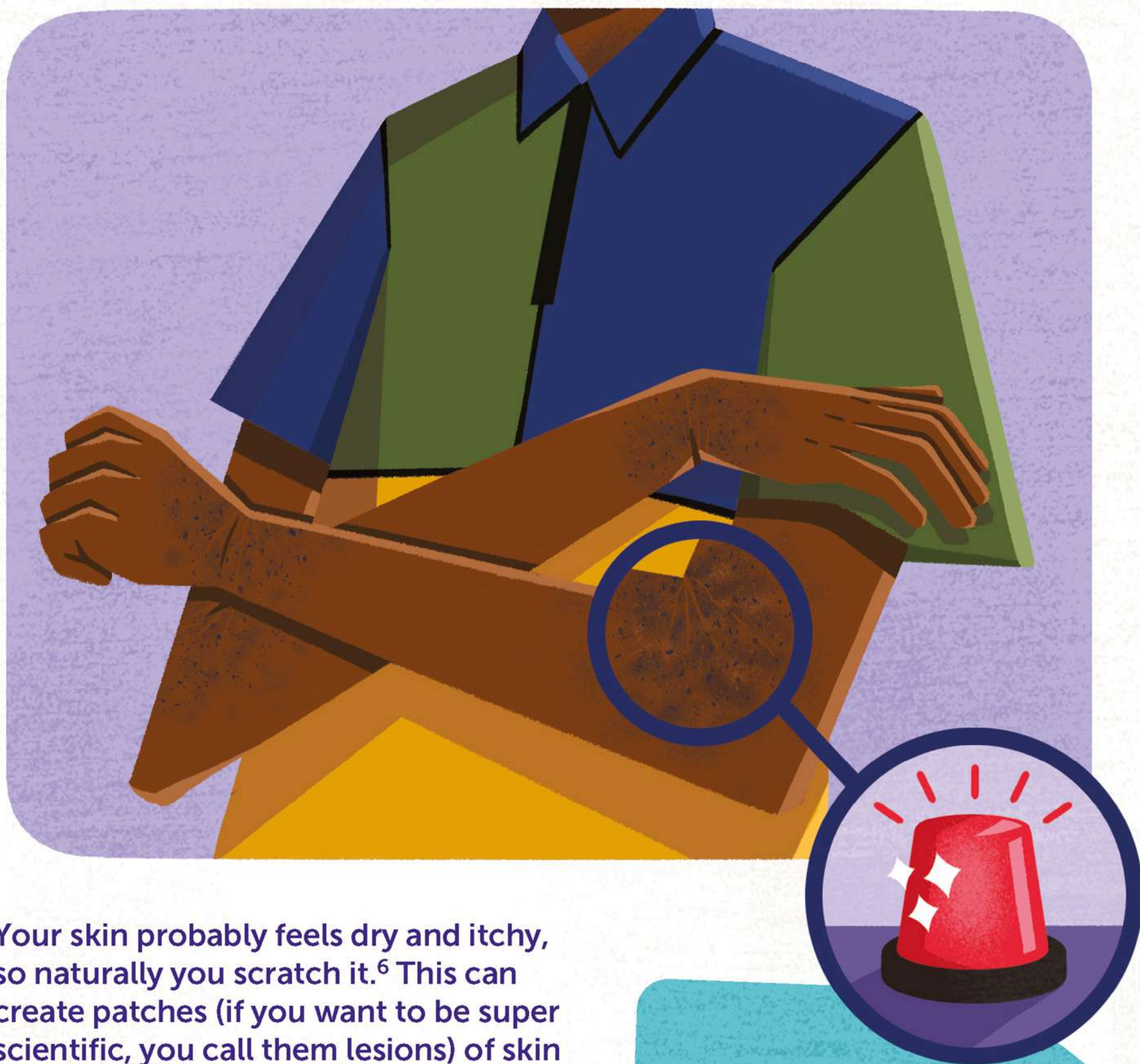


FLARE



Some people can live with AD for a long time.^{8,9} But some people's AD can get better as they get older.⁸⁻¹⁰ Finding the right treatment with your doctor can really help, so that AD doesn't take up too much of your life.¹⁰

Let's take a closer look at what AD looks and feels like.



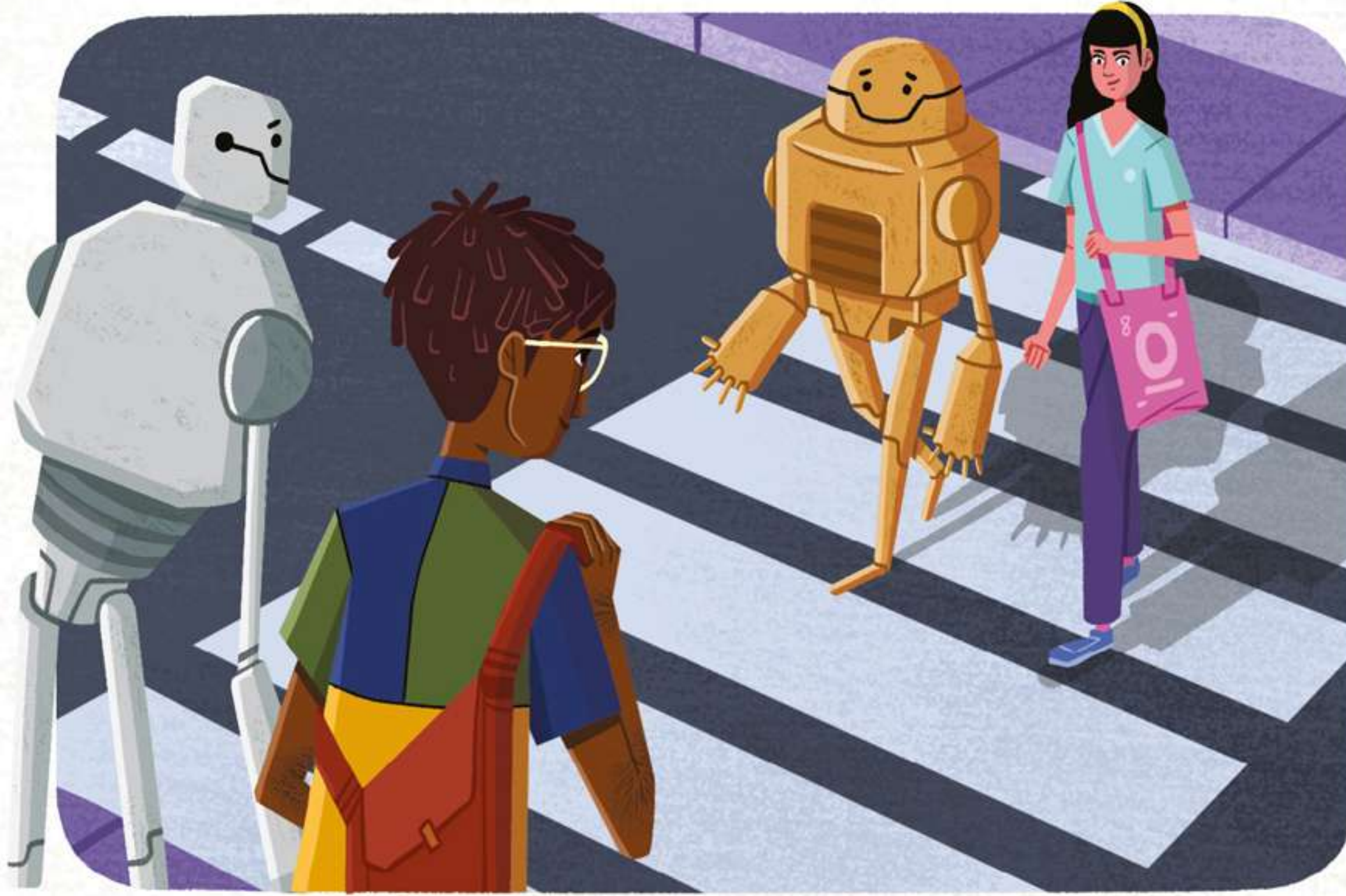
Your skin probably feels dry and itchy, so naturally you scratch it.⁶ This can create patches (if you want to be super scientific, you call them lesions) of skin that can bleed and even ooze (this sounds intense, but it's just moisture escaping).^{2,6,10}

These patches can harden and make you want to scratch even more.^{10,11} That's why I get so frustrated when people tell me to 'just stop scratching'.

Sometimes I also have flares, which are times where your symptoms get worse, thanks to inflammation going on inside your body.^{5,6}

Inflammation happens when your body is trying to fight against harmful things, to try and heal itself.⁴ When a potential threat enters your immune system, like an infection, your body releases chemicals.⁵

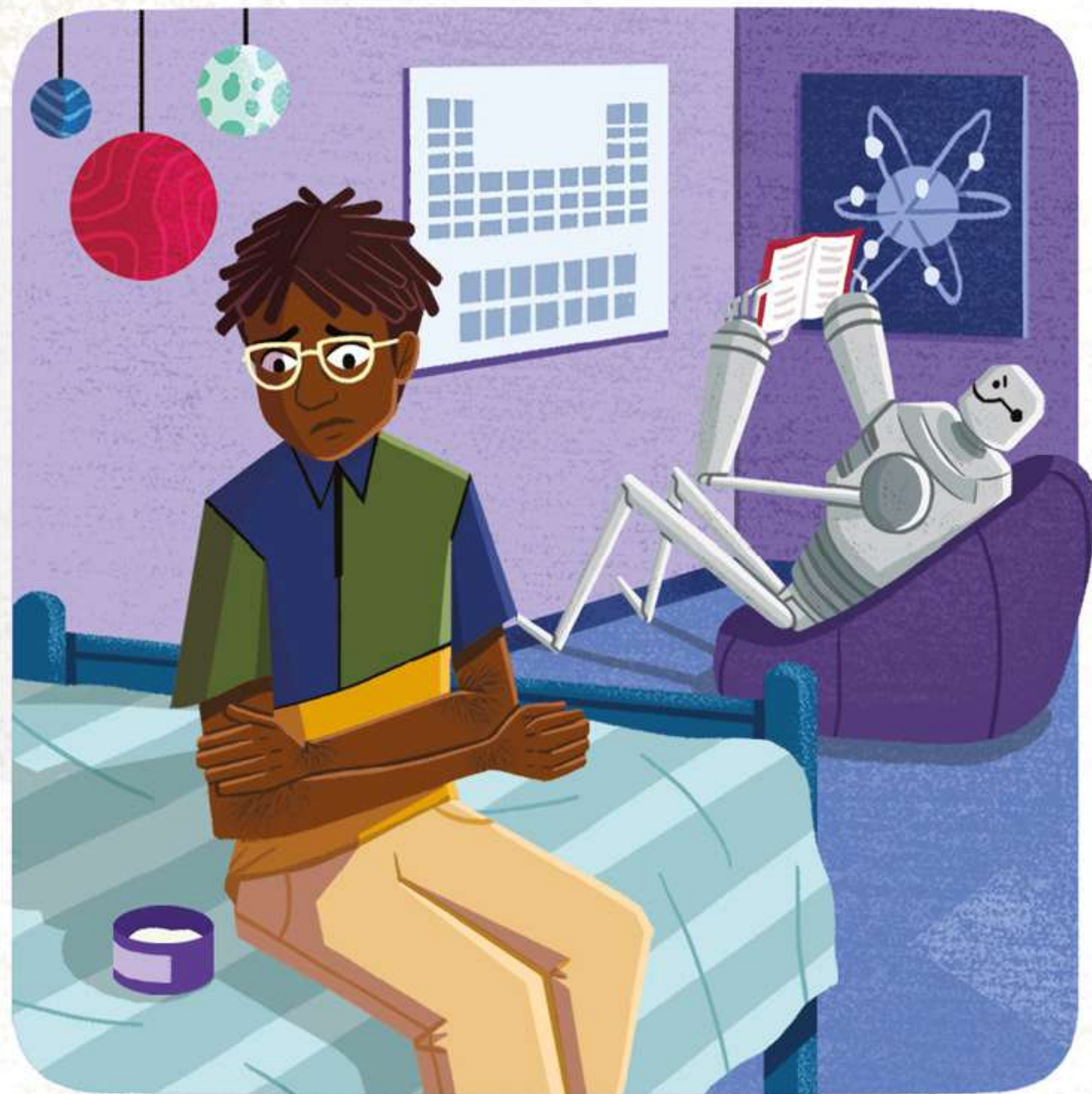
These chemicals trigger a response from your immune system, and that response is inflammation.⁴ As a person with AD, you have more of this inflammation in your body.⁵



Having AD can really get me down. Sometimes, I feel like I'm on my own, and you might feel that too.⁷ But we aren't.

1 in 5 children have AD.¹ That means, in a school with 1000 students, there's roughly 200 children who also have AD.¹ So chances are you'll know someone with AD, just like I do.

When I get home, I make sure I treat my AD. Even though I want to chill and play guitar, I know it's important to keep on top of treating my AD, otherwise my flares will keep coming back.^{6,10} I also make sure to take a note of whether my treatment is helping my AD or not, so I can let my dad and doctor know.



AD can really affect me sometimes. I find that it really helps to talk to my dad or my friends about how I feel. If AD is stopping you from doing the things you want to do, or if it's getting you down, you should speak up. Your family, friends and doctor are all there to help you live a life beyond AD.

References

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