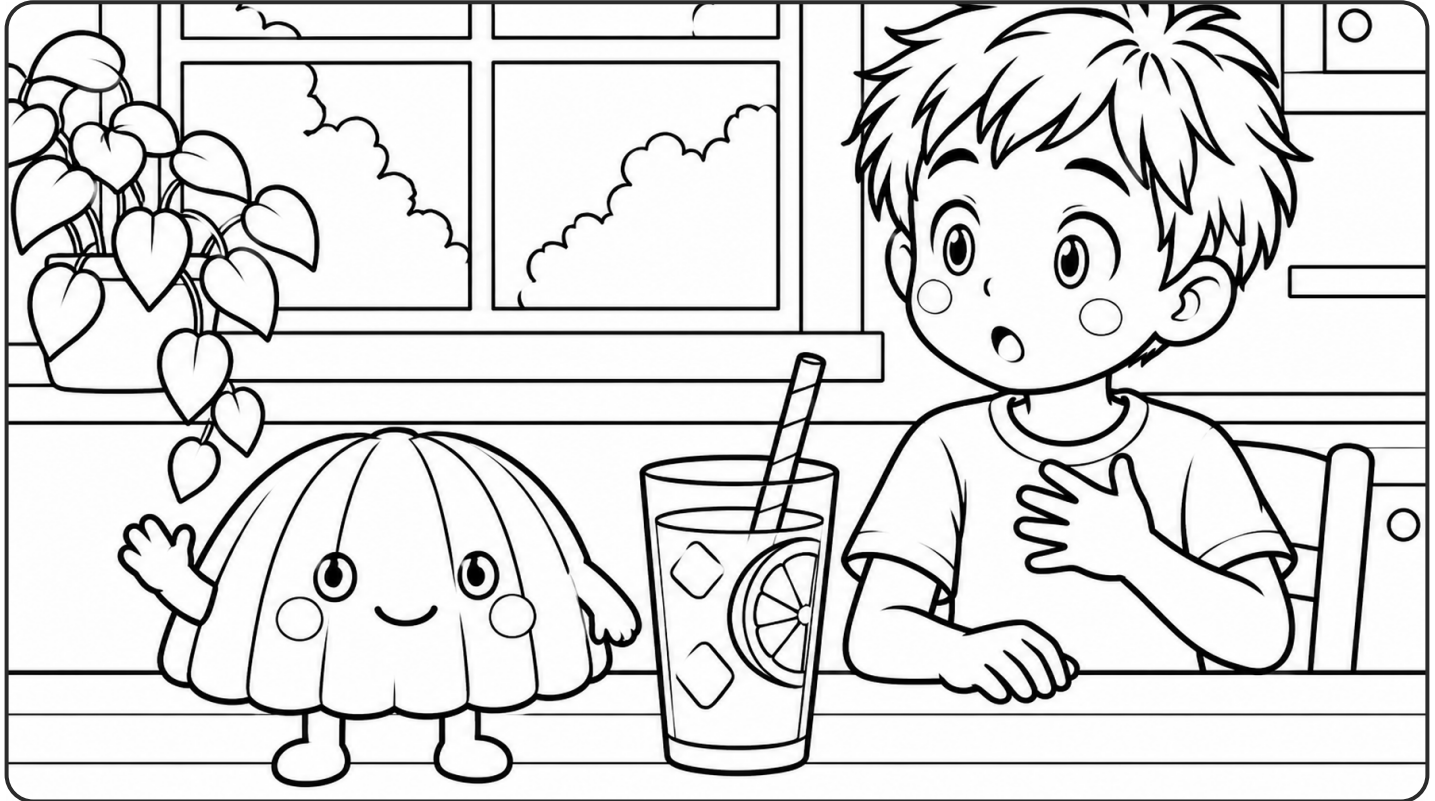


Why do I hiccup?



You are sitting quietly, and suddenly: hic! Then again: hic! And you just cannot stop. What is a hiccup, and how does it happen?



Why?

1. Under your lungs is a wide, flat muscle shaped like a dome, called the diaphragm.

When you breathe in, it pulls down and gets flat, and air rushes into your lungs. When you breathe out, it goes back up. Down, up. Down, up. Nice and smooth.

2. But once in a while, it twitches and jerks down, fast and hard.

That sudden jerk makes you suck in air, very quickly. It is a tiny gasp that you did not plan at all.

3. Then a little gate snaps shut. Hic!

At the top of your windpipe there is a little gate, where your voice is made. Just after the jerk, that gate snaps shut. The rushing air bumps into the closed gate, and that makes the sound.

Try it! Feel your breathing muscle

You need: just your hand

1. Put one hand on your tummy, just below your ribs.
2. Breathe in slowly, and feel your tummy push out. That is your diaphragm moving down!
3. Now breathe out, and feel it go back in.
4. Next time you have hiccups, put your hand there and feel the little jumps.

Video + more questions:
whywhywhykids.com/hiccup



scan with a grown-up