

KIT GOES TO THE DENTIST

Dear Parent,

This coloring book will help prepare your child for a visit to the dentist. It talks about how important it is to practice good oral habits to prevent or reduce tooth decay (cavities). Please sit down with your child and read this story together.

- Talk about the story and answer your child's questions.
- Explain why it's important to brush your teeth every day.
- Help your child learn the correct way to brush. Practice with your child.
- Supervise your child's toothbrushing.
- Teach your child to eat healthy foods to build strong teeth and keep them healthy. Tell your child to avoid foods such as cake, candy, cookies, and soft drinks.

Your child's first or baby teeth are called primary teeth. They are very important because they help your child eat and speak. They also hold spaces for your child's permanent teeth.

As a parent, you should help your child learn how to care for his or her teeth. If your child learns good oral habits such as brushing, flossing and regular dental checkups at a young age, he or she will likely continue these habits for life. The checklist on the next page has tips to keep a healthy mouth which is important for overall good health.

Your friend,



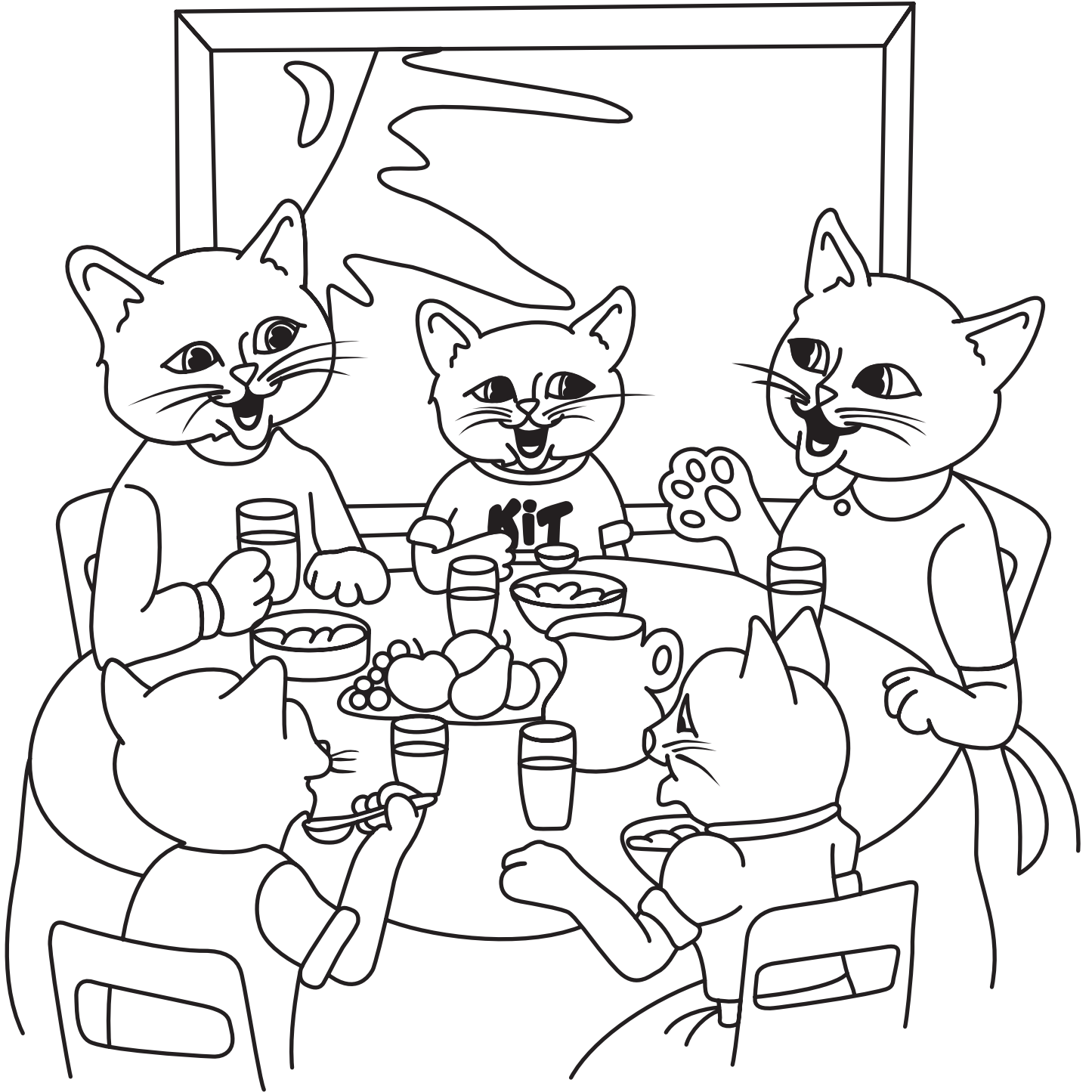
Doctor Gentlepaw

Dr. Gentlepaw's Checklist

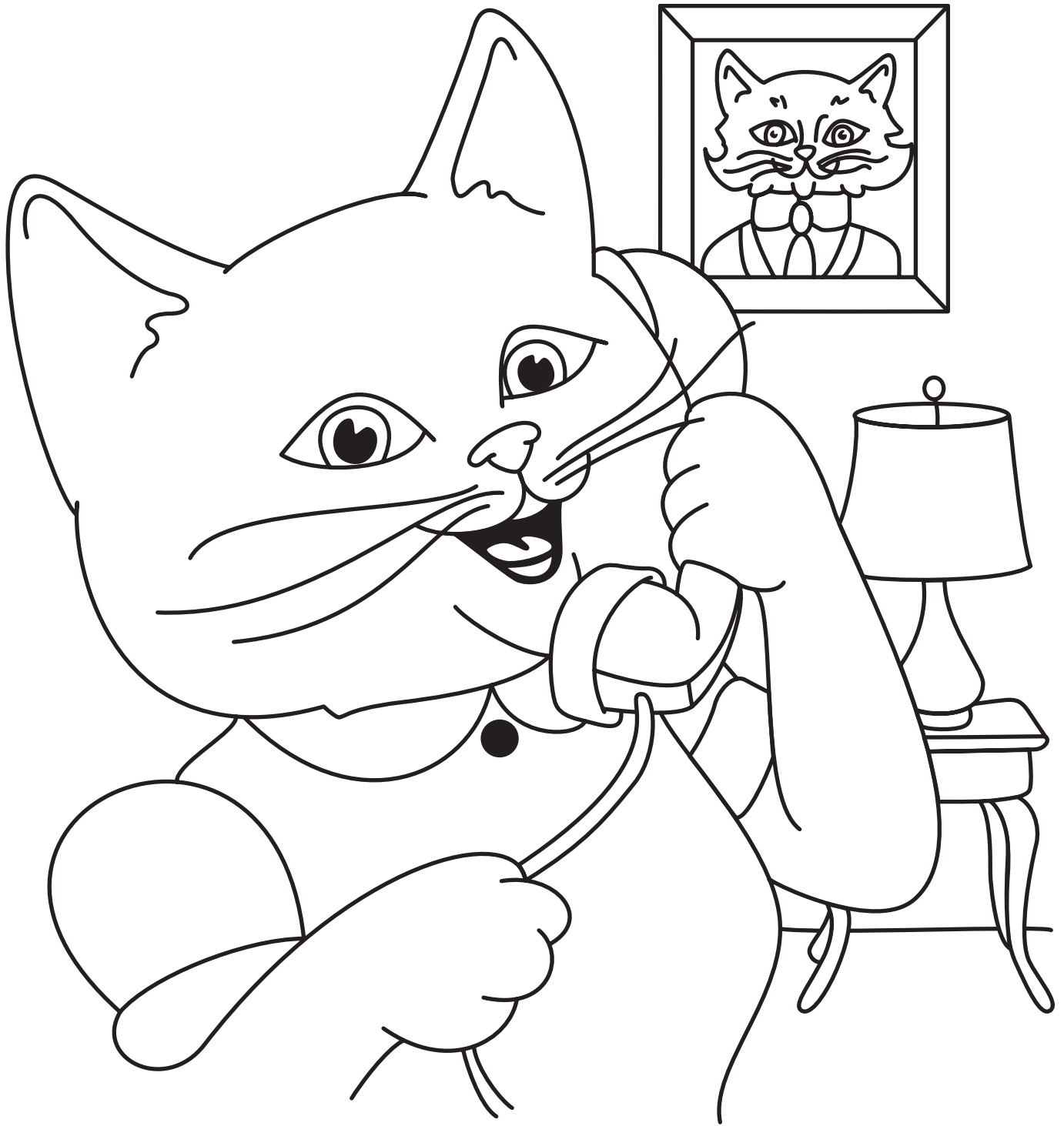
- After you feed your infant, clean his or her gums with a washcloth. Your baby's first tooth will appear between six and eight months of age. By the time your child is three, he or she will have 20 teeth. It's important to care for these teeth right away. When a tooth comes in, clean it using a child's soft-bristled toothbrush. Do not use any toothpaste. After you brush your child's teeth, be sure to rub his or her gums.
- Germs that are spread from one person to another cause cavities. Parents, guardians and caretakers should be careful to avoid giving germs to babies. Do not use your mouth to test the warmth of a baby bottle. Do not share forks or spoons with your baby. And, do not clean a pacifier or a bottle nipple by putting it in your mouth.
- See a dentist as soon as your child's first tooth comes in or before his or her first birthday. Your child should visit the dentist at least once a year – but two times a year is better.
- When your child is two, start brushing his or her teeth with toothpaste that contains fluoride. Use a very small amount – equal to the size of a child's pinky nail. Teach your child to spit out the toothpaste. Do not let him or her swallow it. As early as possible, teach your child how to brush his or her teeth. You will need to help your child until he or she has good hand control, which is usually around age six or seven.
- Check to see if your home's water supply contains fluoride. If your drinking water does not have fluoride, talk to your child's doctor or dentist about whether your child needs a fluoride supplement. If you don't know if your water supply has fluoride, ask your child's doctor or dentist or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site, "My Water's Fluoride," at <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/MWF/index.asp>.
- Pay attention to how your child's gums and teeth look when they are healthy. If you do this you will know when they're not okay. Regularly lift your child's lips to check his or her teeth for small white or brown spots. If you see spots, it may be decay (cavities). Take your child to the dentist right away. Also look at your child's gums to see if they are swollen, bleeding or very red. Talk with your dentist if you find any of these signs.
- When your child's permanent back teeth start to come in, around age six or seven, talk to your dentist about sealants. Sealants can help prevent decay on permanent back teeth.
- It is important for your child to eat healthy foods. It will help him or her grow and stay healthy. Give your child a variety of foods from the five major food groups and limit snacks. Avoid foods and drinks that are high in sugar.



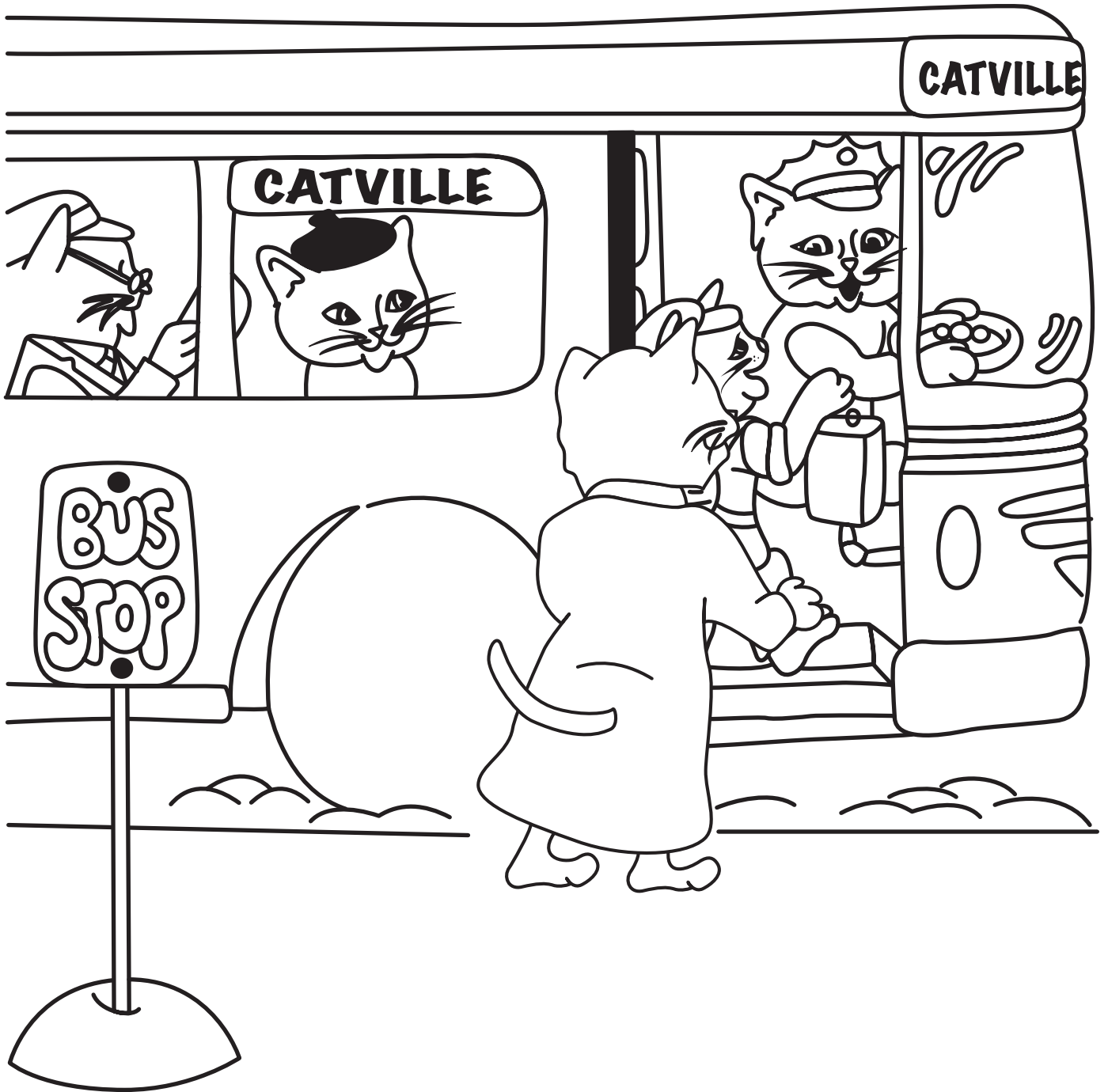
Once upon a time there was a kitten named Kit. He lived with his Mother Cat and Father Cat and his brother and sister. Kit had a friendly smile.



One bright, sunny morning when the Cat family was eating oatmeal and fruit, Mother Cat said, "You're growing up, Kit. I think it's time you visit the dentist." "Meow," nodded Father Cat. "Meow," nodded Kit, and "Meow," nodded his brother and sister.



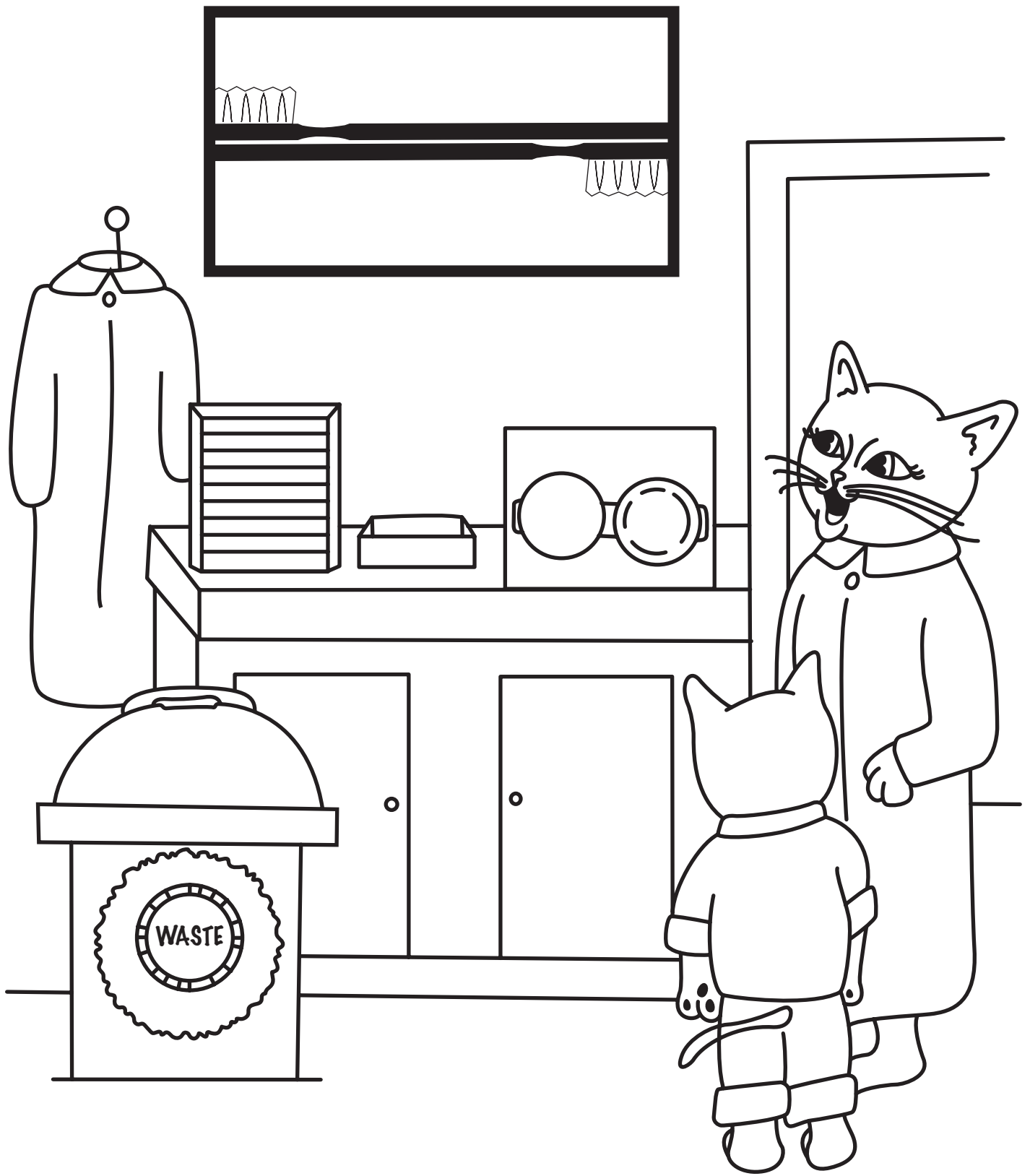
So, after the Cats ate their fruit and oatmeal, drank their milk and brushed their teeth, Mother Cat called the dentist. "Kit wants to come see you, Doctor Gentlepaw," she said. There was a pause. "Yes," said Mother Cat, "Friday at two will be fine."



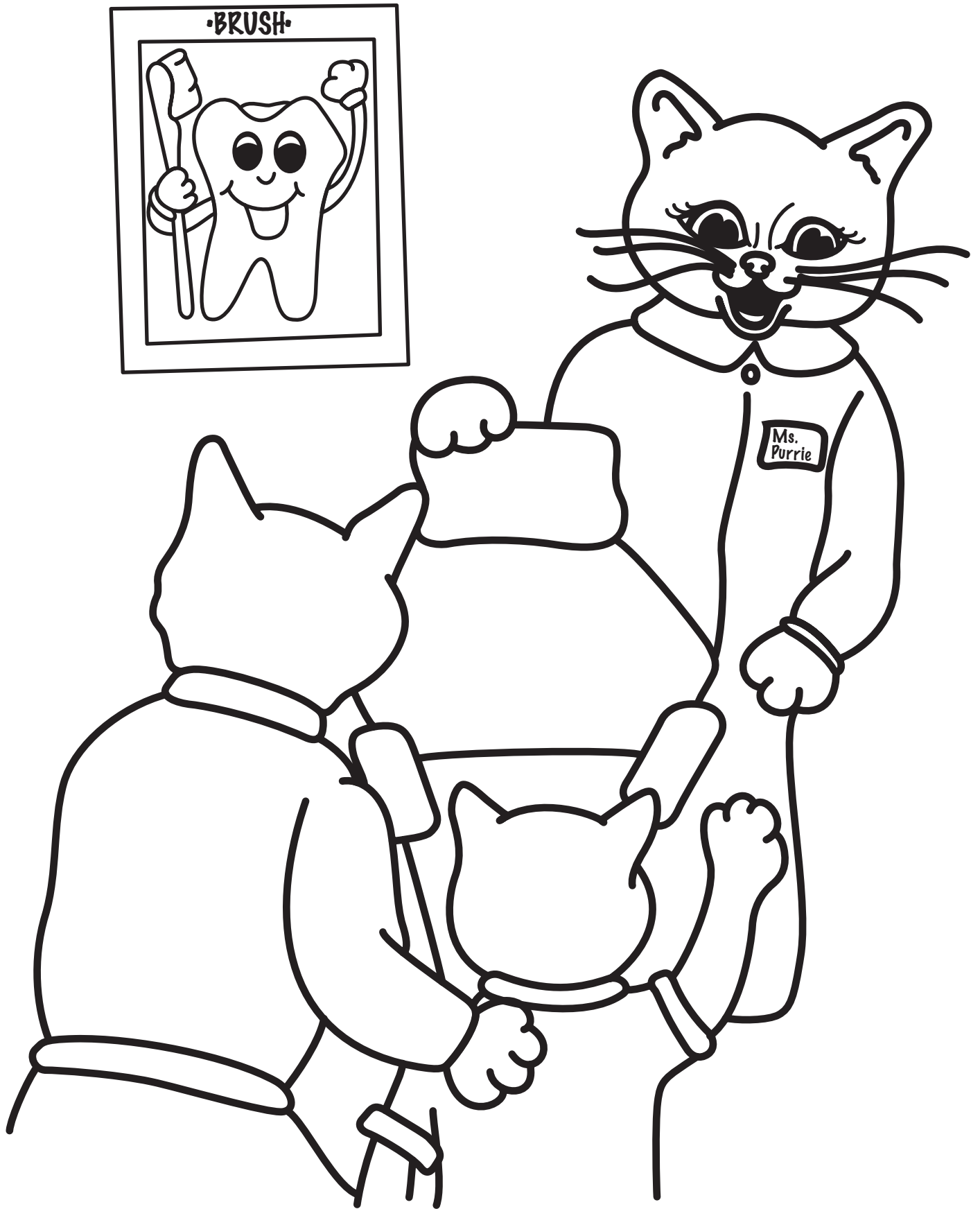
Kit was happy and excited as he climbed onto the big, shiny bus.
"I'm on my way to the dentist," he told the driver.



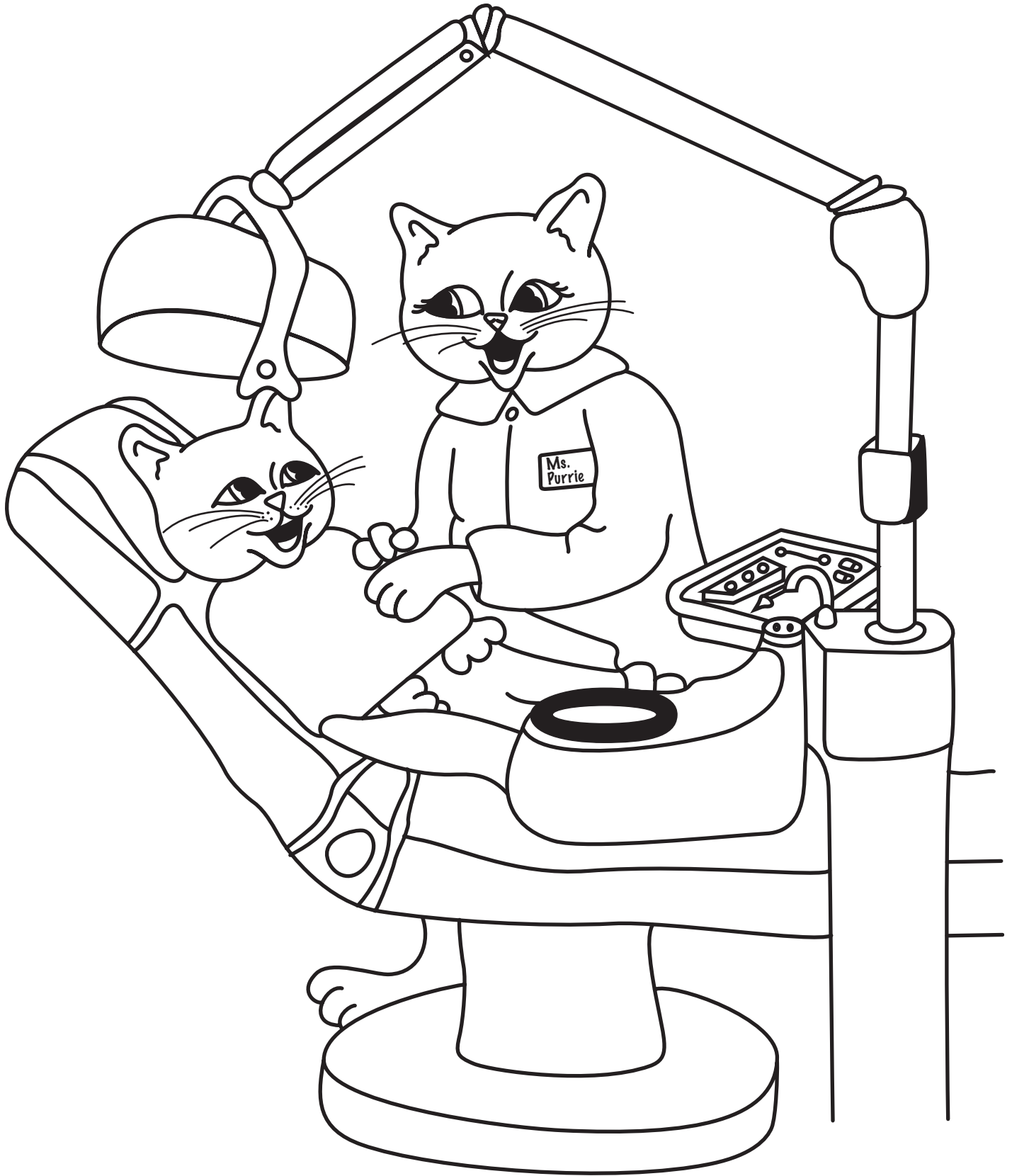
When they arrived at the dentist's office, the dental assistant said, "Come in Kit, let me show you around."



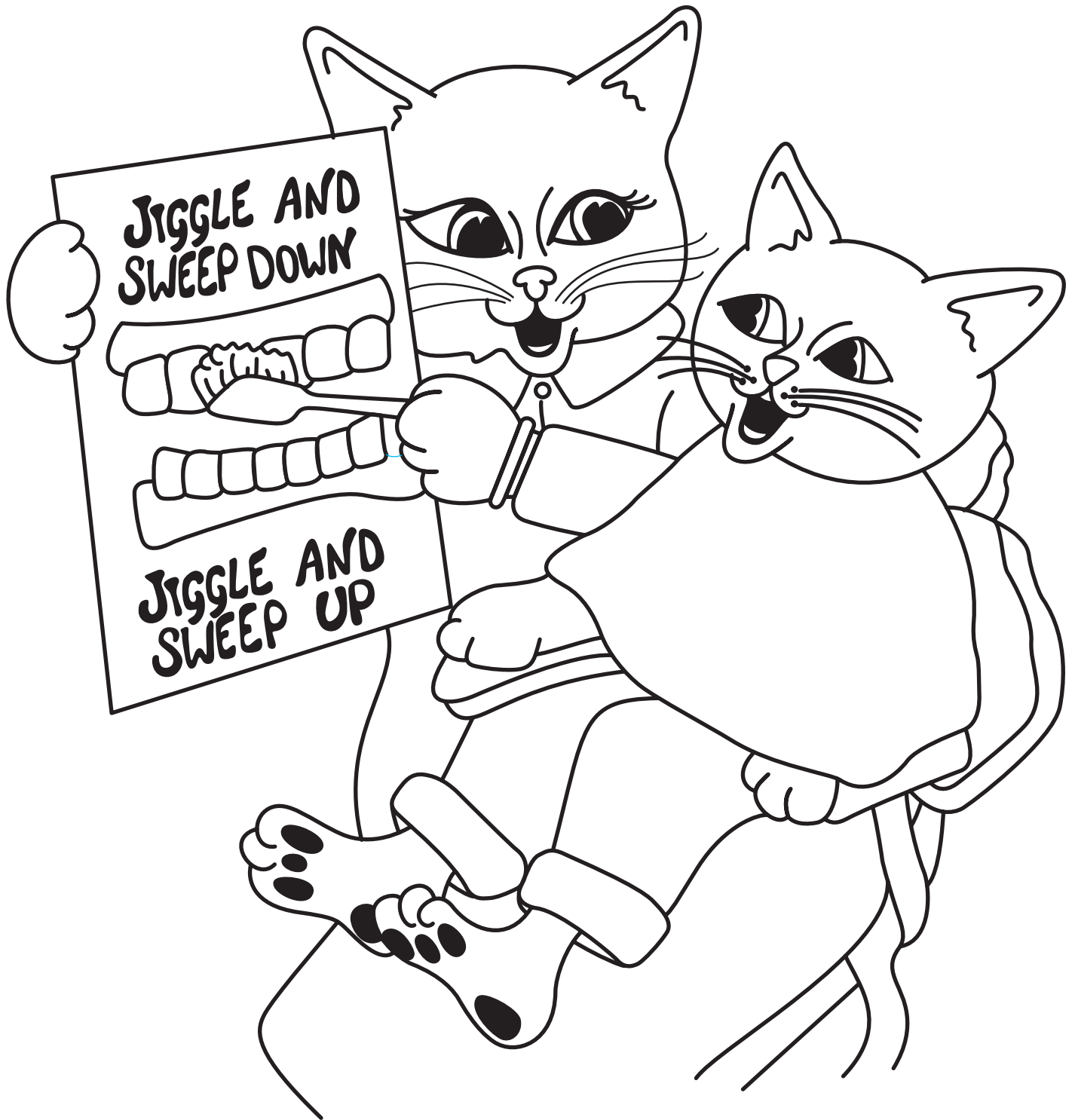
"We keep our supplies in this area where there aren't any germs. We also remove germs from our tools (instruments). This process is called sterilization."



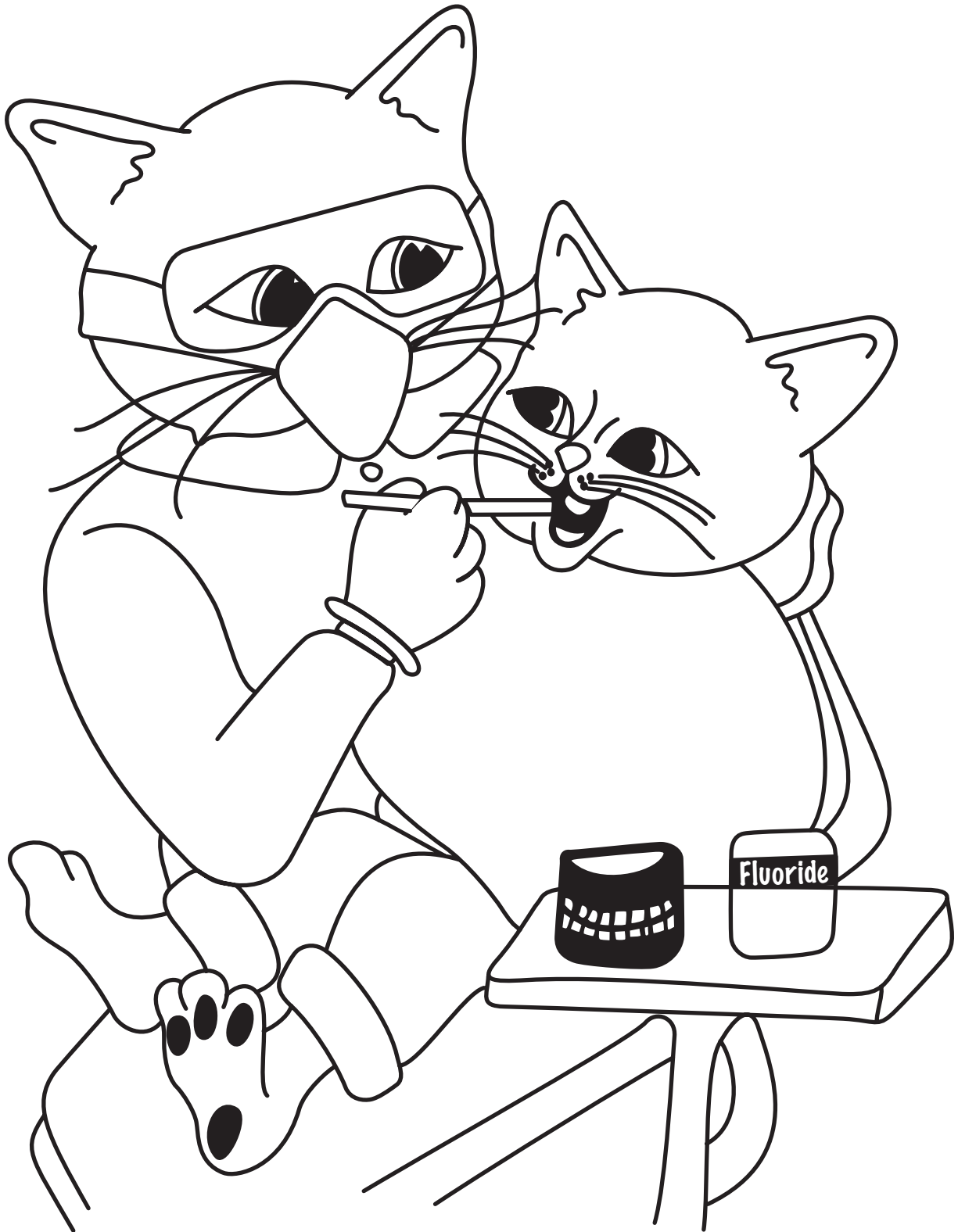
"Hello, Kit," said Ms. Purrie. "I am the dental hygienist. Doctor Gentlepaw and I will work as a team to help you have strong, healthy teeth."



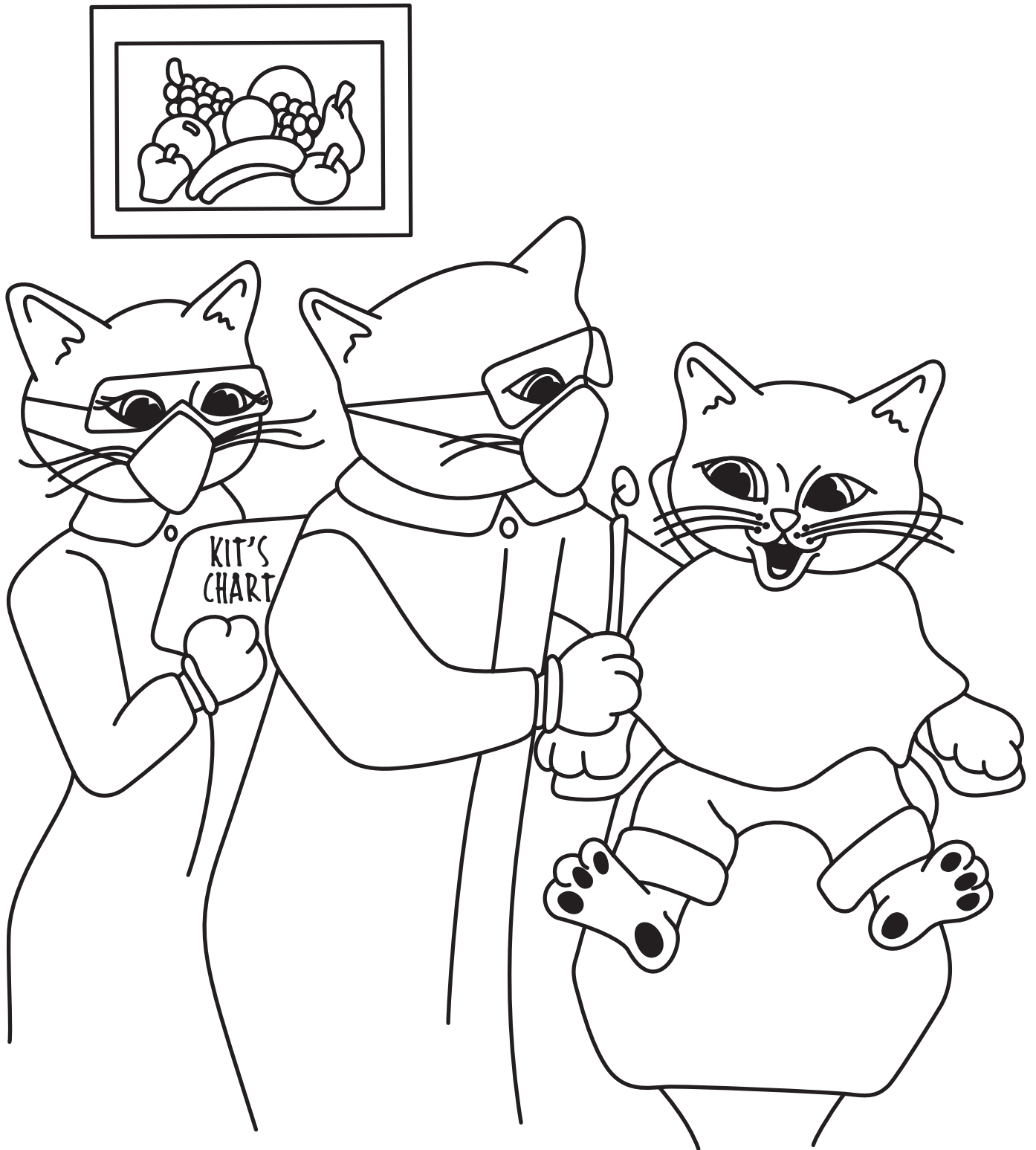
Ms. Purrie said, "I am going to give your teeth an extra-special cleaning. When you get older, we will put sealants on your permanent, back teeth because they have spots where food can get stuck. A sealant is a thin, soft plastic coating that protects the chewing surface of the back teeth and keeps out germs that cause decay."



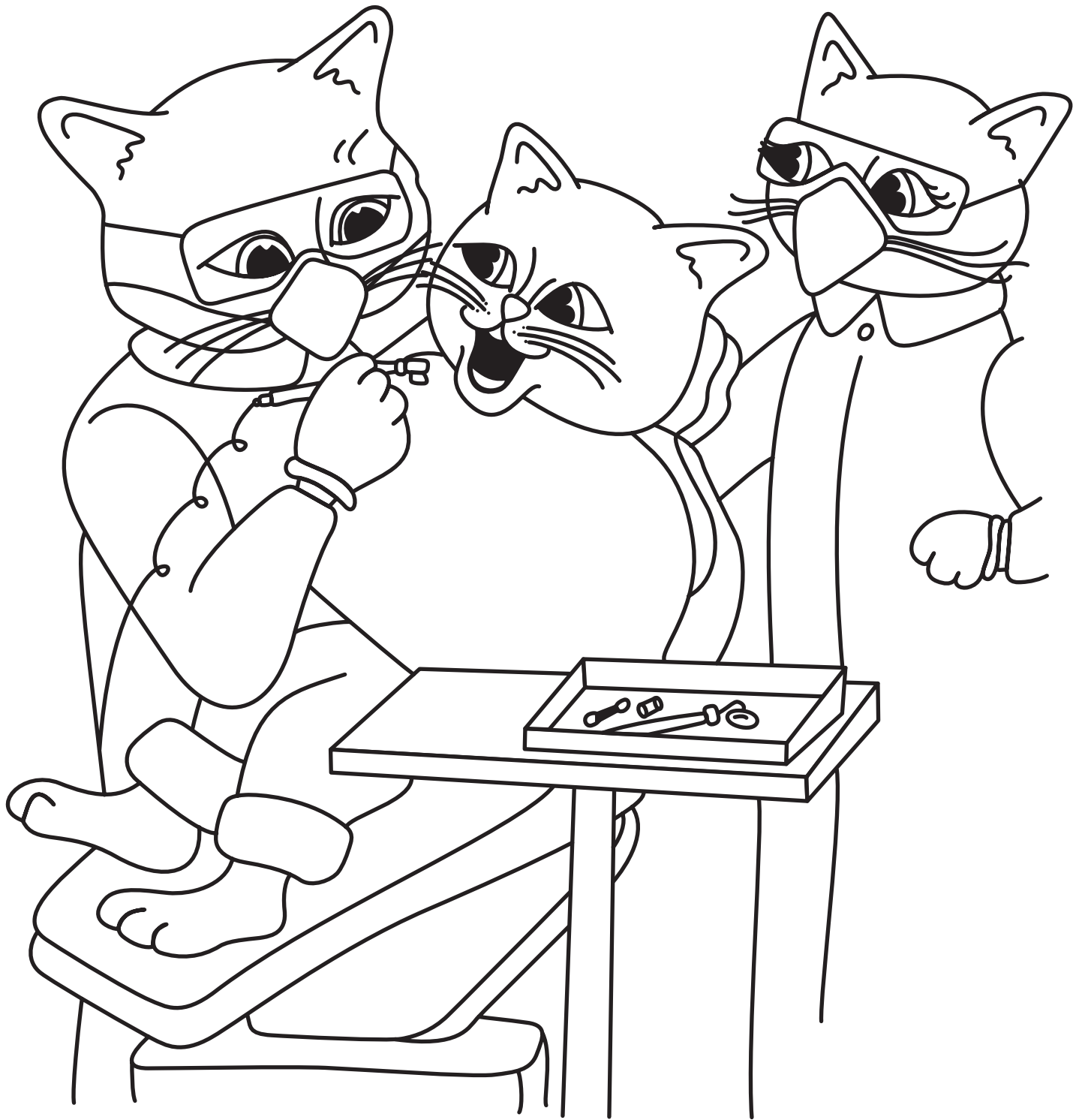
"I will show you the right way to brush your teeth," said Ms. Purrie. "PLACE the bristles of your soft toothbrush where the teeth and gums meet. JIGGLE the brush gently back and forth. Then, SWEEP the brush away from the teeth. Do all your teeth this way. Finish by scrubbing the part of the teeth where you chew. Clean every part of every tooth including the front and back. Then, brush your tongue. Be sure to use a soft-bristled brush."



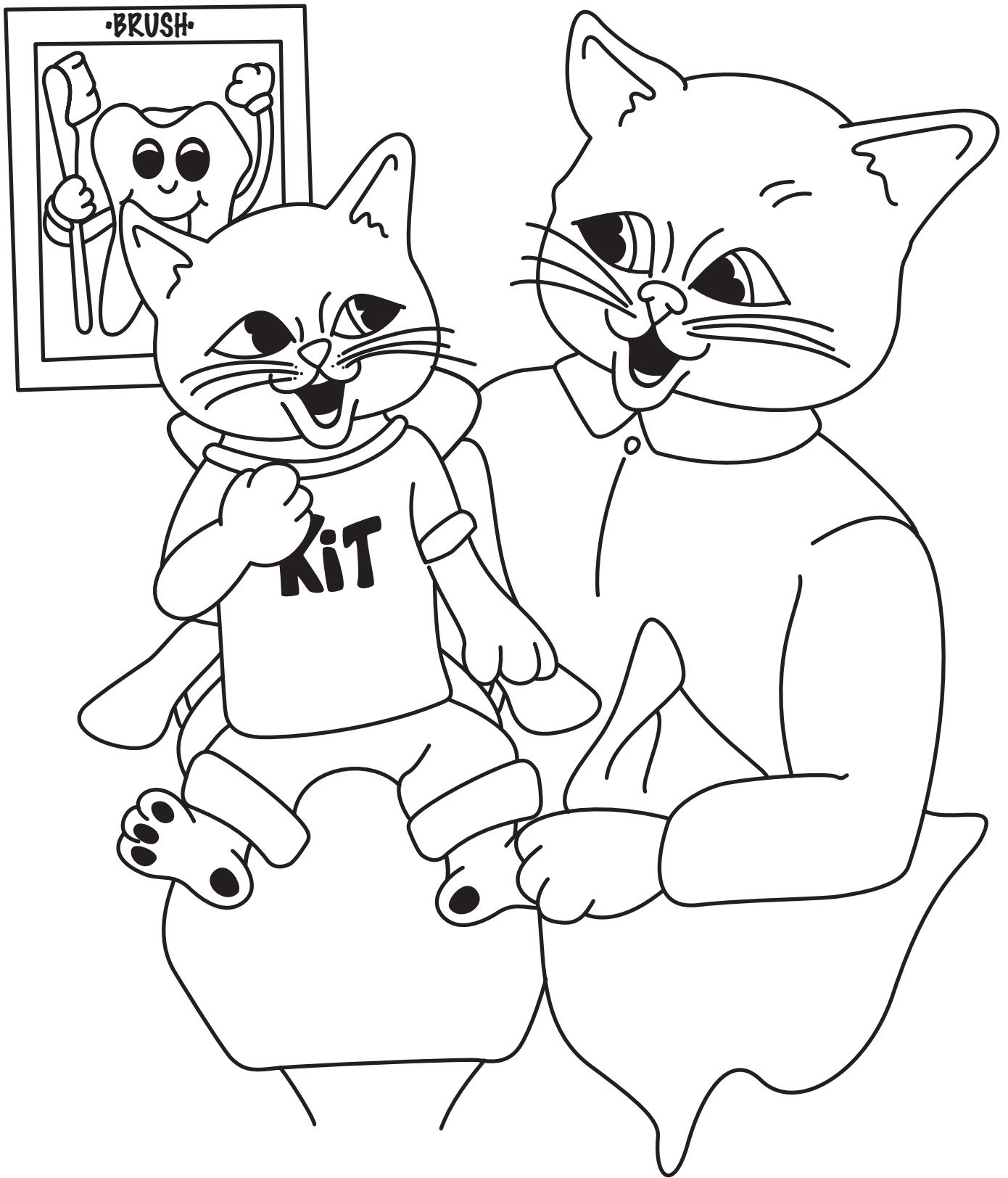
"And now," said Ms. Purrie, "since our town doesn't have enough fluoride in our drinking water, Doctor Gentlepaw recommends a fluoride supplement. I'm going to paint your teeth with a fluoride solution. It will make your teeth stronger and help prevent cavities. Then, Doctor Gentlepaw will check your teeth."



"How are you today, Kit?" asked Doctor Gentlepaw. "I'm fine," said Kit. "I hope my teeth are strong and healthy." "Well, I'll look at your teeth and see," said Doctor Gentlepaw. "This mirror helps me see all your teeth, even the ones in the back."



"I'm going to look at and count all of your teeth. Did you know that by the age of three, you should have 20 teeth? If you want to have strong, healthy teeth like Mom and Dad, it is up to you to keep them clean."

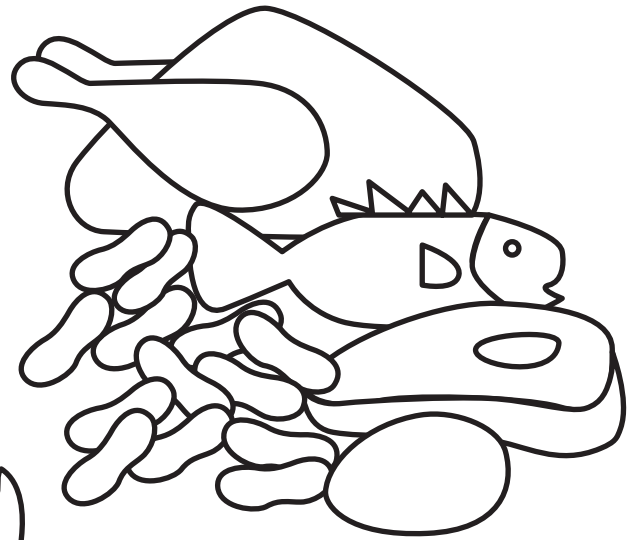


"Do you brush your teeth after every meal?" asked Dr. Gentlepaw. "Yes," said Kit, "I brush after every meal." "Good!" Dr. Gentlepaw said to Kit. "Now I'll show you some foods that are best for your teeth."

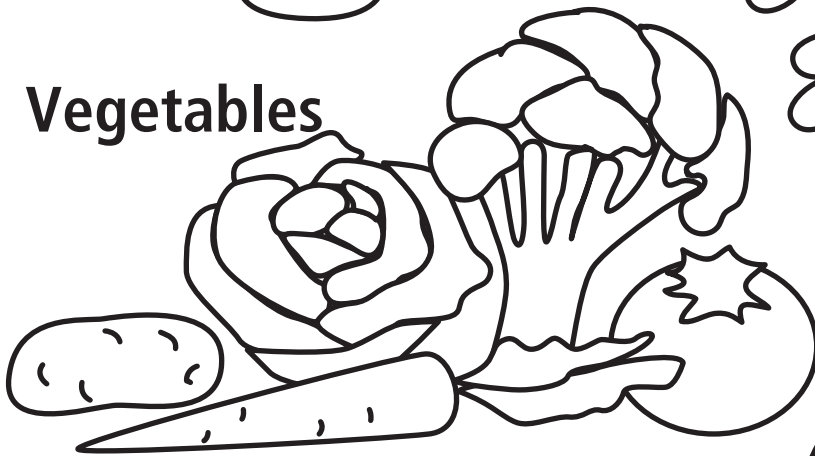
**Milk,
Yogurt
& Cheese**



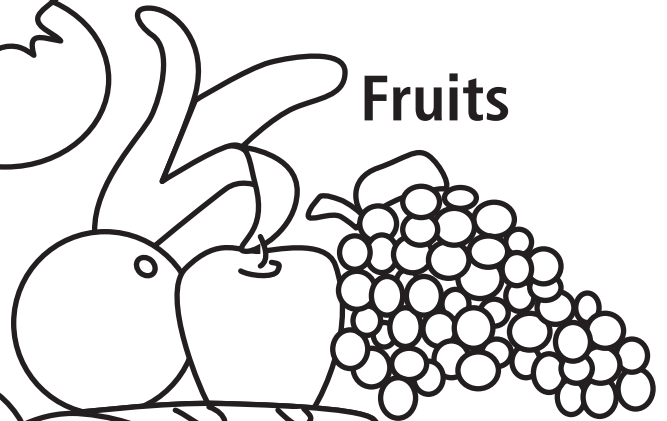
**Meat, Poultry, Fish,
Dry Beans, Eggs & Nuts**



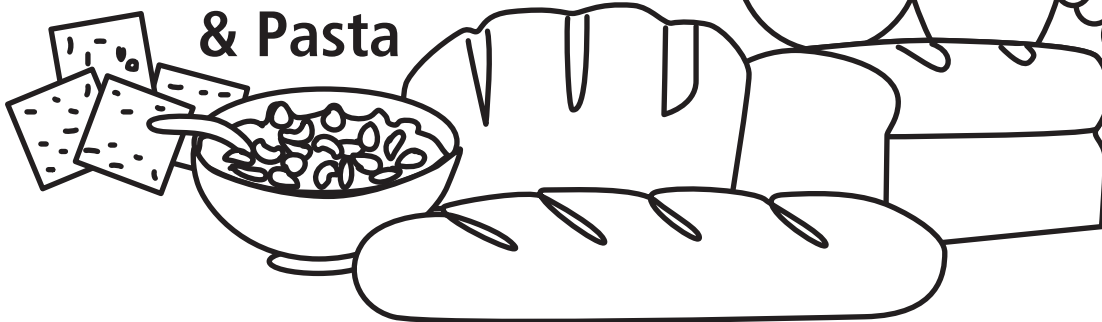
Vegetables



Fruits



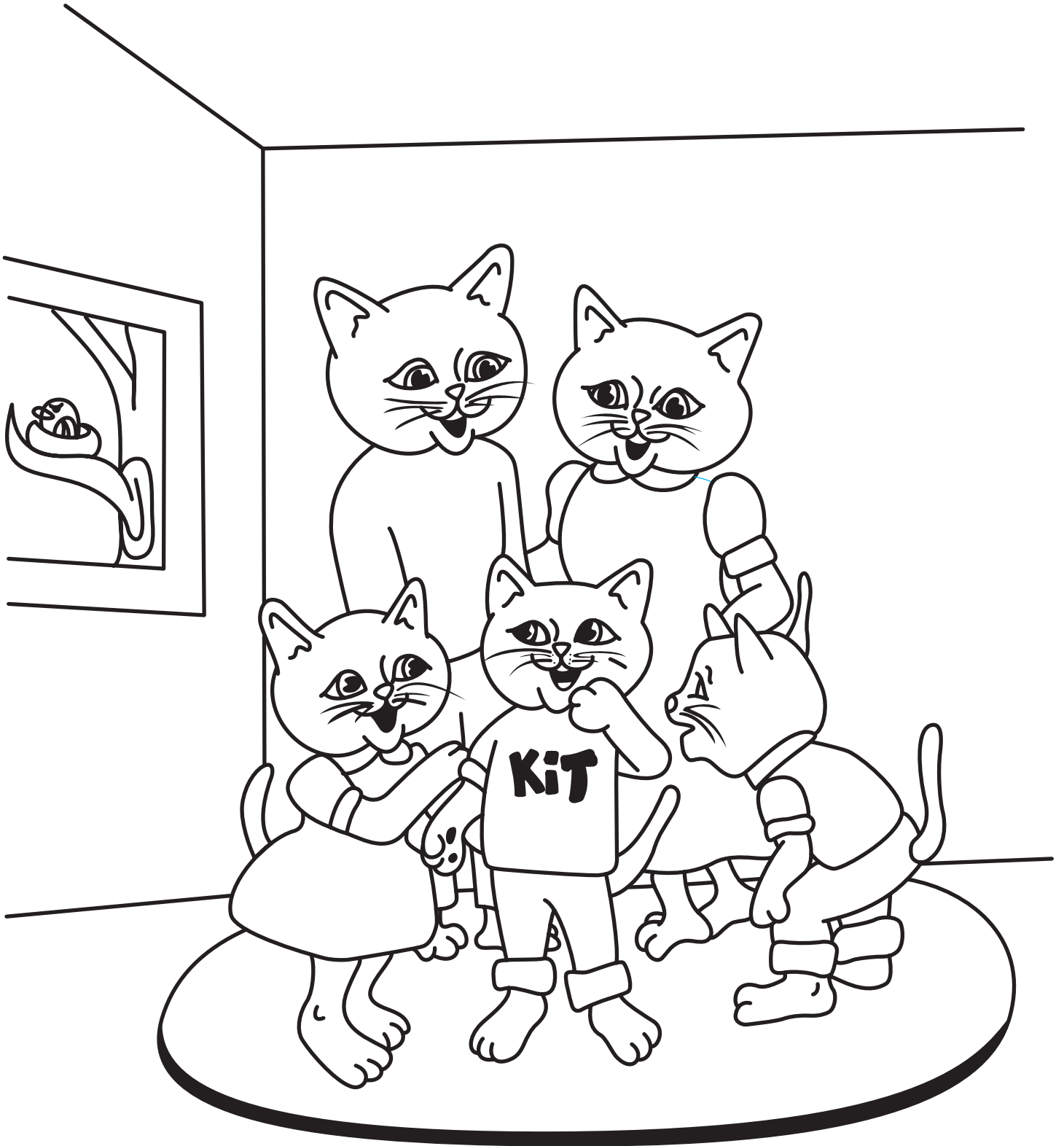
**Bread,
Cereal, Rice
& Pasta**



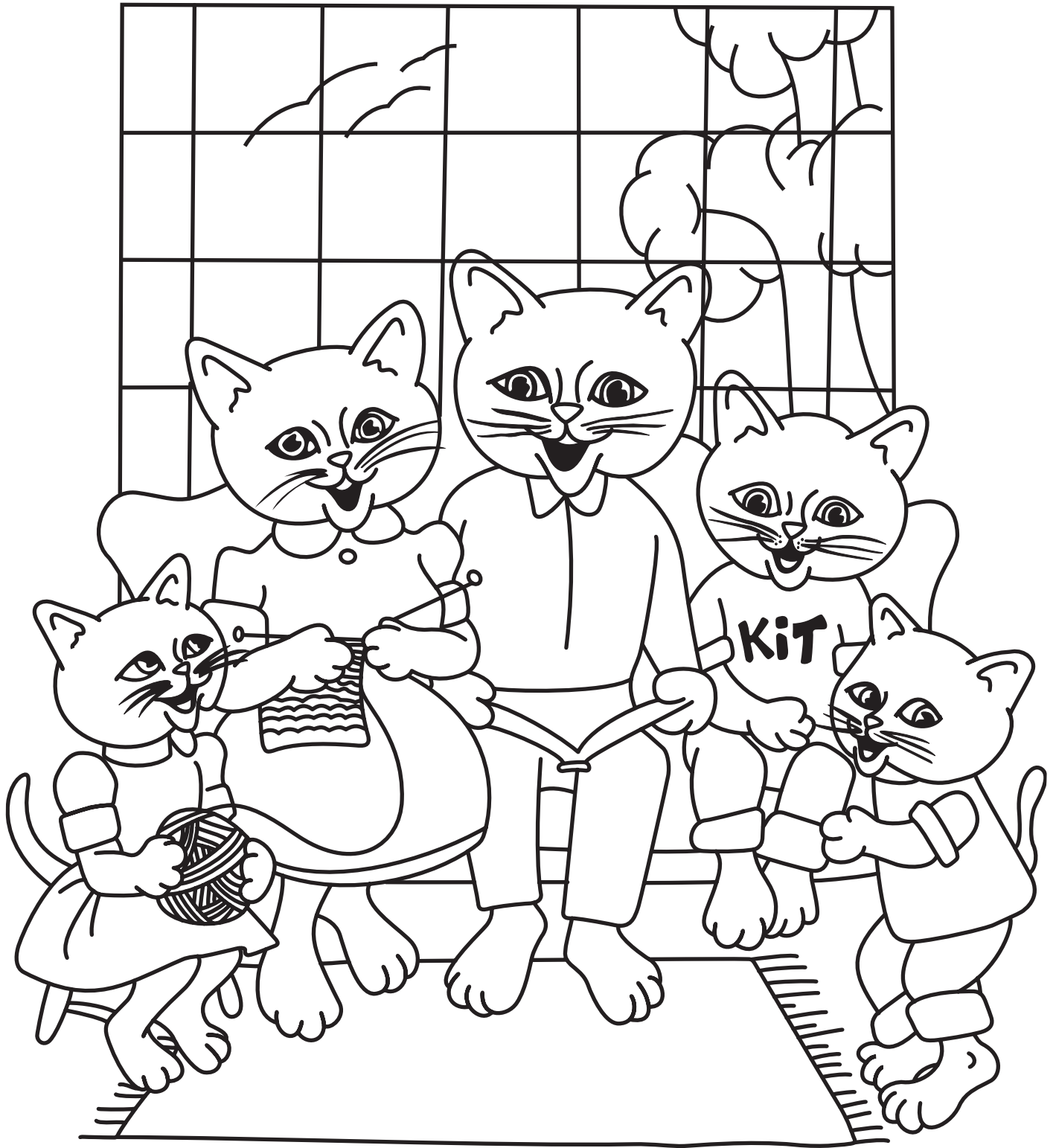
"Kit, for good health, everyone should have a well balanced diet," said Dr. Gentlepaw. "That means you should eat a wide variety of foods each day. Eat foods such as eggs, fish, chicken, beans, tofu, meat, milk or soymilk, fruits and vegetables, grains, cereal, breads, nuts and a small amount of healthy fat like olive oil instead of butter or margarine. Eat very few sweet foods, such as cake and candy, or sweet drinks because they may cause cavities."



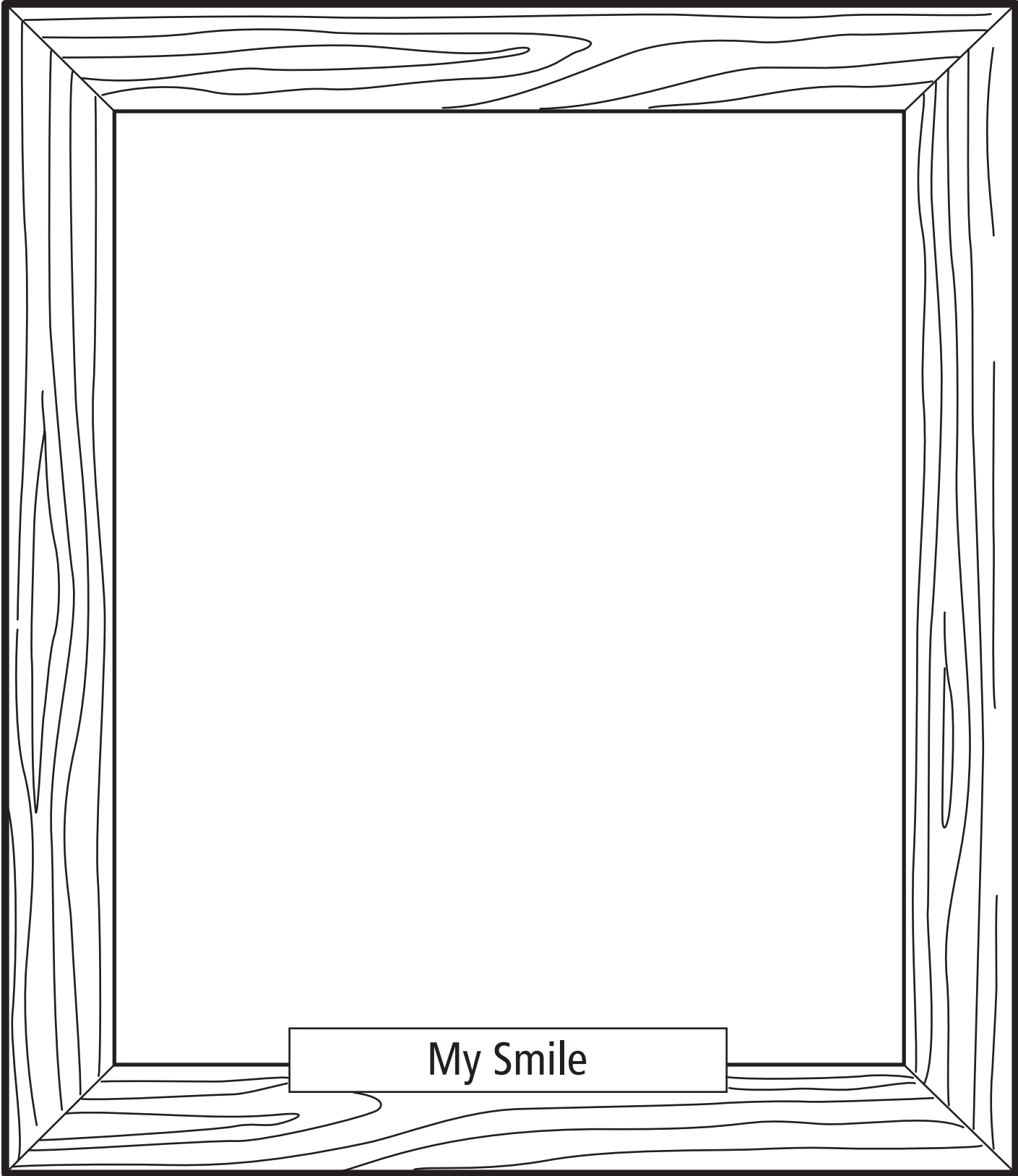
"Goodbye, Ms. Purrie. Goodbye, Doctor Gentlepaw," Mother Cat said. "Kit will be back to see you when it is time for his next dental checkup."



"See where the hygienist cleaned my teeth," said Kit. "When I grow up I'm going to have strong, healthy teeth. Do you remember what Doctor Gentlepaw said to do for strong, healthy teeth?" said Mother Cat. "Well," said Kit, "I have to see the dentist regularly, and brush my teeth after every meal, and eat as few sweets as possible."



Kit says "Hi" to all his friends and hopes you are taking good care of your teeth. Are you?



Draw a picture of your smile.

