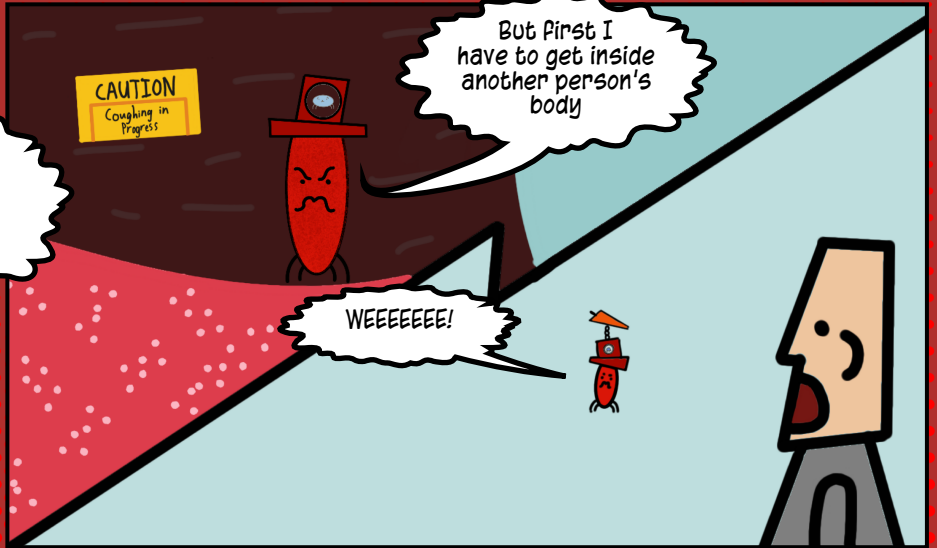
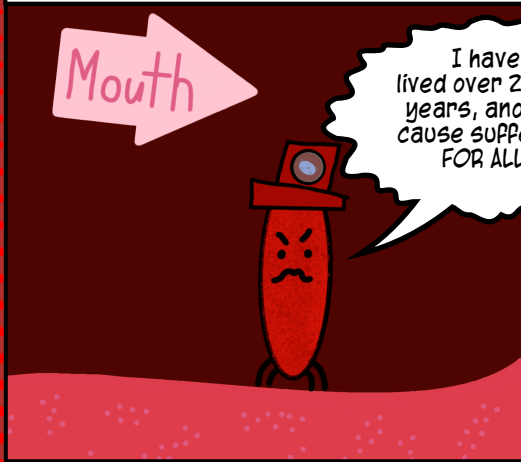


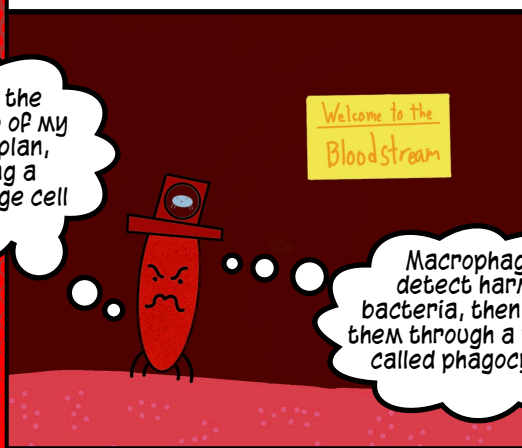
THE TALES OF THE LURKING LEPRAE

Once upon a time, the Leprosy causing bacteria, *Mycobacterium Leprae* (Leo for short) was planning his next attack.

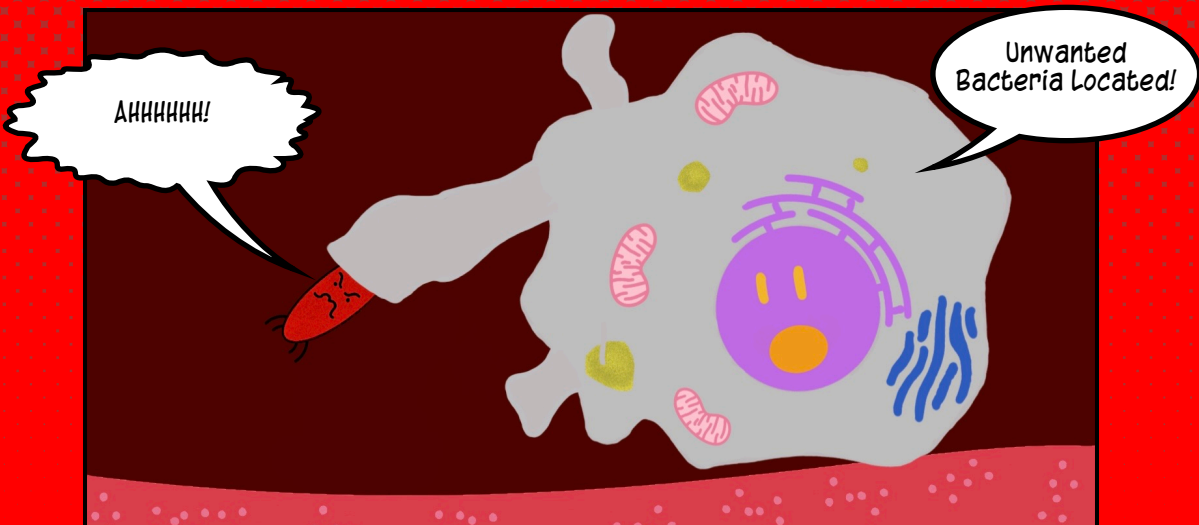
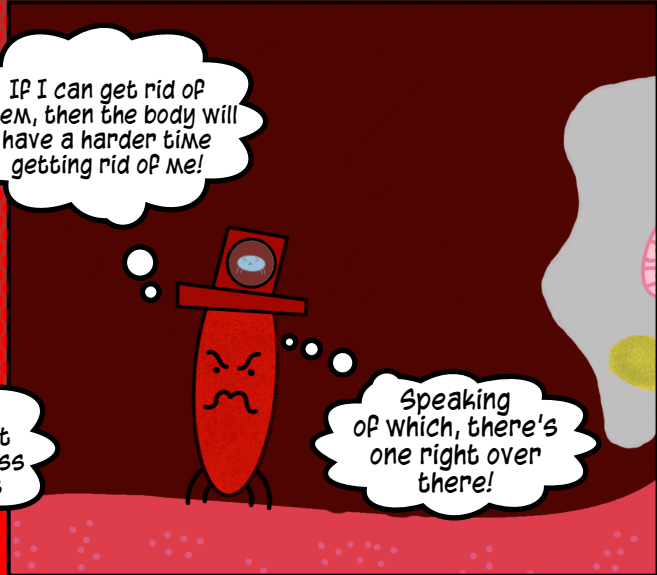


Once inside the blood stream of the new human, Leo began to plan how he was going to cause the most damage to the peripheral nervous system

Now for the first step of my master plan, hijacking a macrophage cell

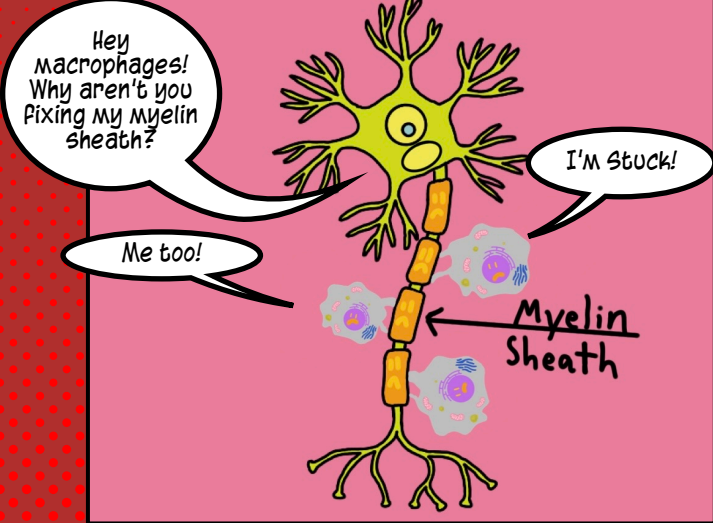


IF I can get rid of them, then the body will have a harder time getting rid of me!



FIVE YEARS LATER

Inside the body, the peripheral nervous system was working as normal, until one day...



Hey Macrophages! Why aren't you fixing my myelin sheath?

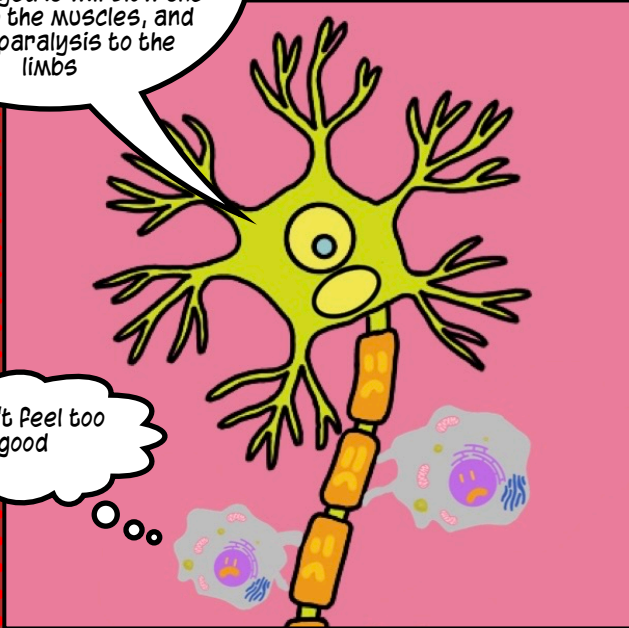
I'm stuck!

Me too!

Myelin Sheath

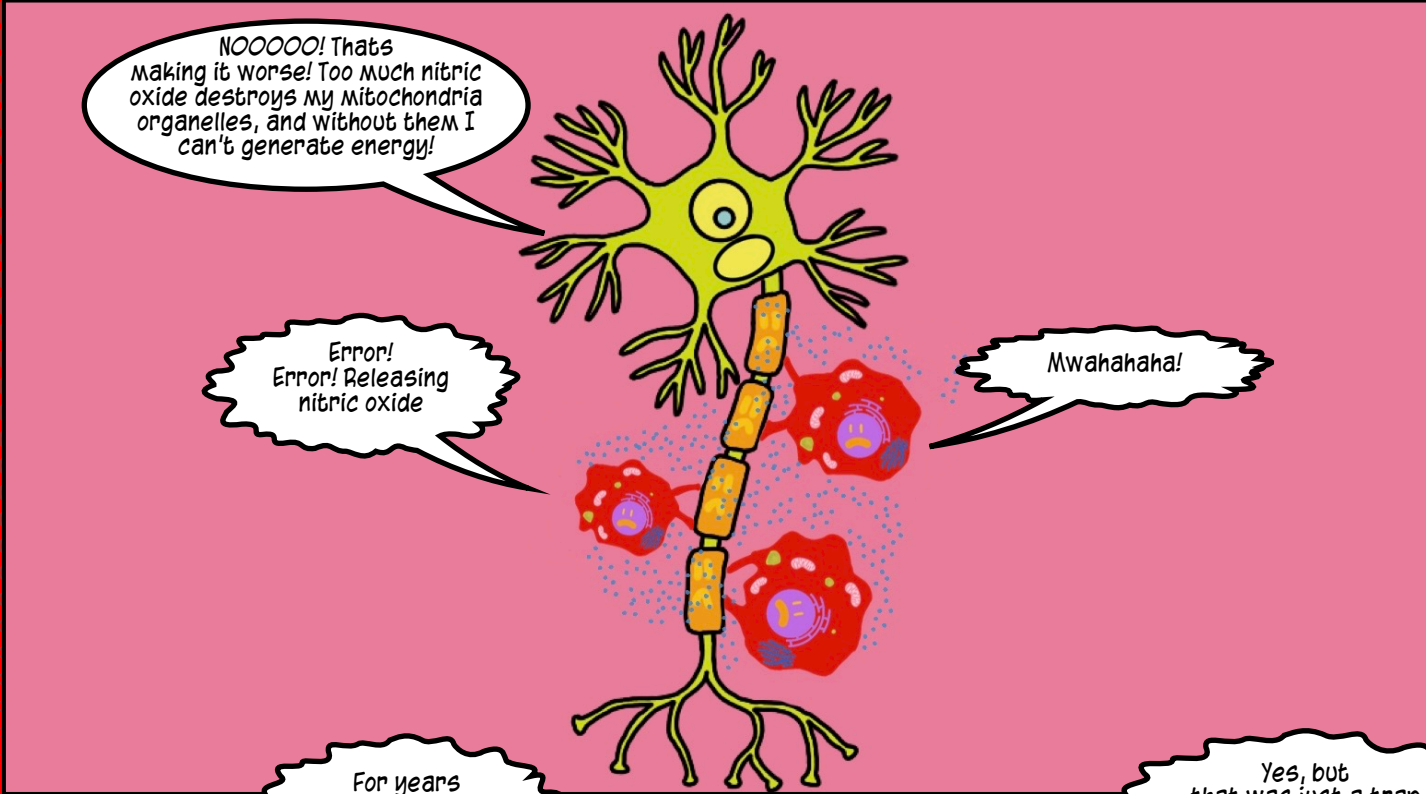
This panel shows a green neuron with a yellow myelin sheath. Several purple macrophages are nearby. One macrophage asks why it isn't fixing the myelin sheath. The neuron replies it's stuck, and another macrophage agrees.

Well You better get moving because the myelin sheath allows me to transport electrical signals from the brain much faster. If it is destroyed it will slow the signal to the muscles, and cause paralysis to the limbs



I don't feel too good

The neuron's myelin sheath is now fragmented and yellow. A macrophage is shown in a thought bubble, looking distressed.

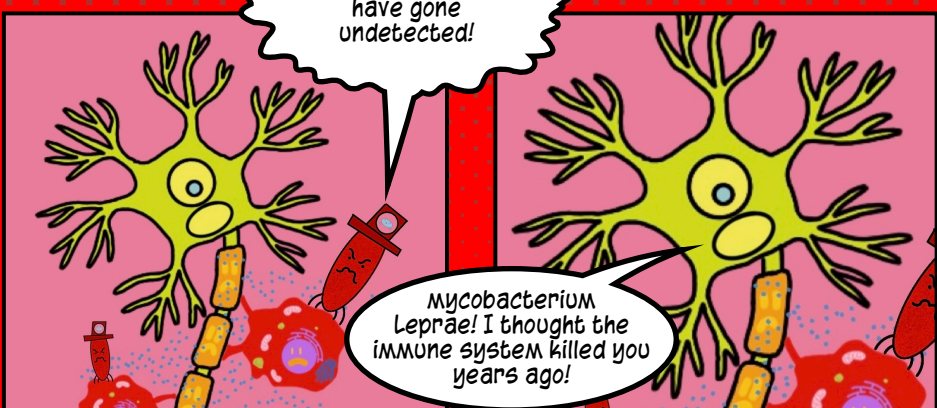


NOOOOO! That's making it worse! Too much nitric oxide destroys my mitochondria organelles, and without them I can't generate energy!

Error! Error! Releasing nitric oxide

Mwahahaha!

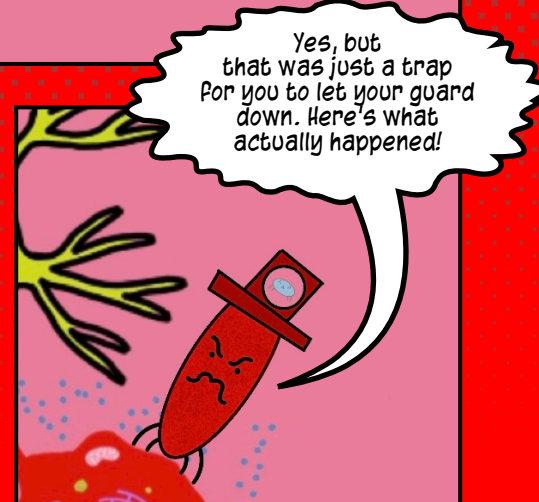
This panel shows the neuron being surrounded by several red macrophages. One neuron exclaims that too much nitric oxide is destroying its mitochondria. A macrophage replies with an error message, and another macrophage laughs.



For years my master plans have gone undetected!

Mycobacterium Leprae! I thought the immune system killed you years ago!

This panel shows a red Mycobacterium Leprae bacterium with a face and arms attacking the neuron. The bacterium says it has been undetected for years and that the immune system thought it was dead.

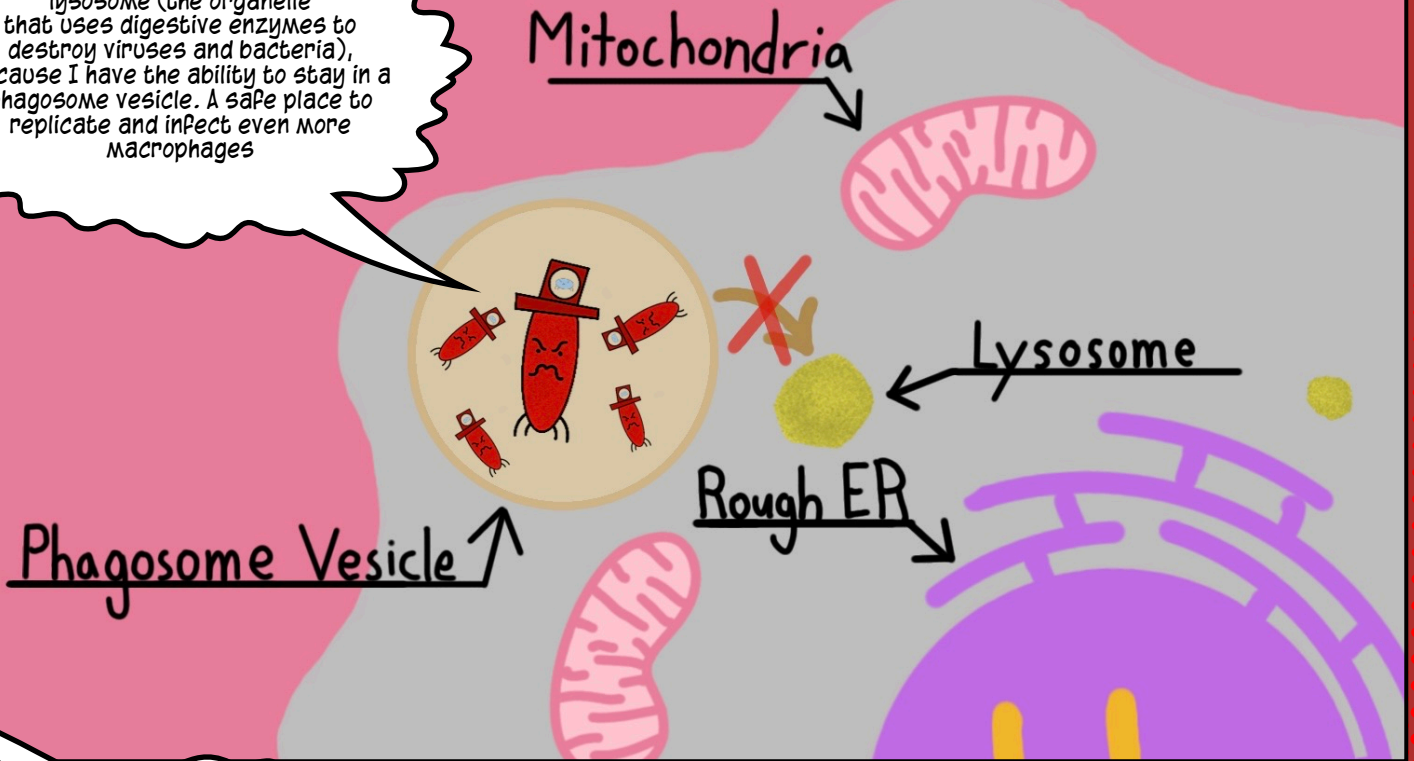


Yes, but that was just a trap for you to let your guard down. Here's what actually happened!

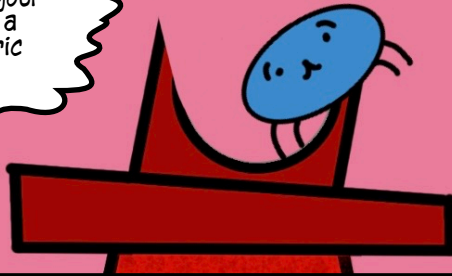
A close-up of the red Mycobacterium Leprae bacterium, which has a mischievous expression.

A FEW YEARS EARLIER

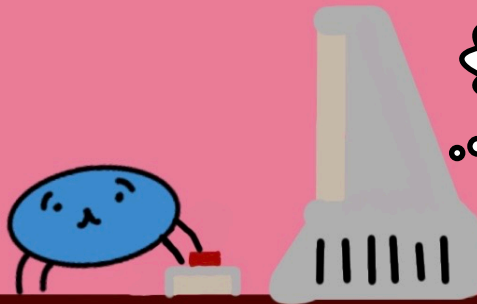
I never died in the lysosome (the organelle that uses digestive enzymes to destroy viruses and bacteria), because I have the ability to stay in a phagosome vesicle. A safe place to replicate and infect even more macrophages



Then I used my little molecular friend called PGL-1 to reprogram your macrophages to release a dangerous amount of nitric oxide.

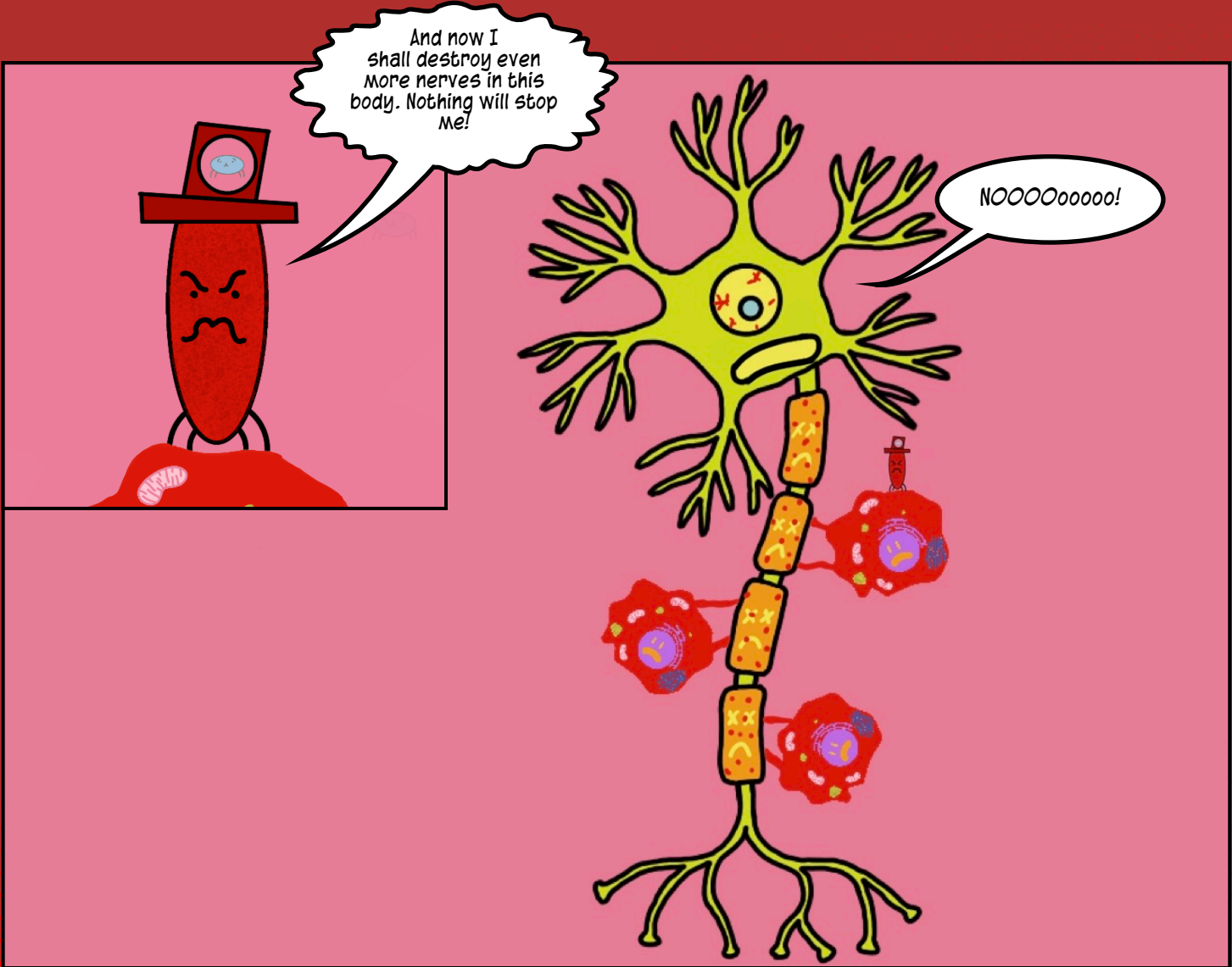


[Releasing Nitric Oxide]



I suddenly feel a great urge to create a large amount of nitric oxide

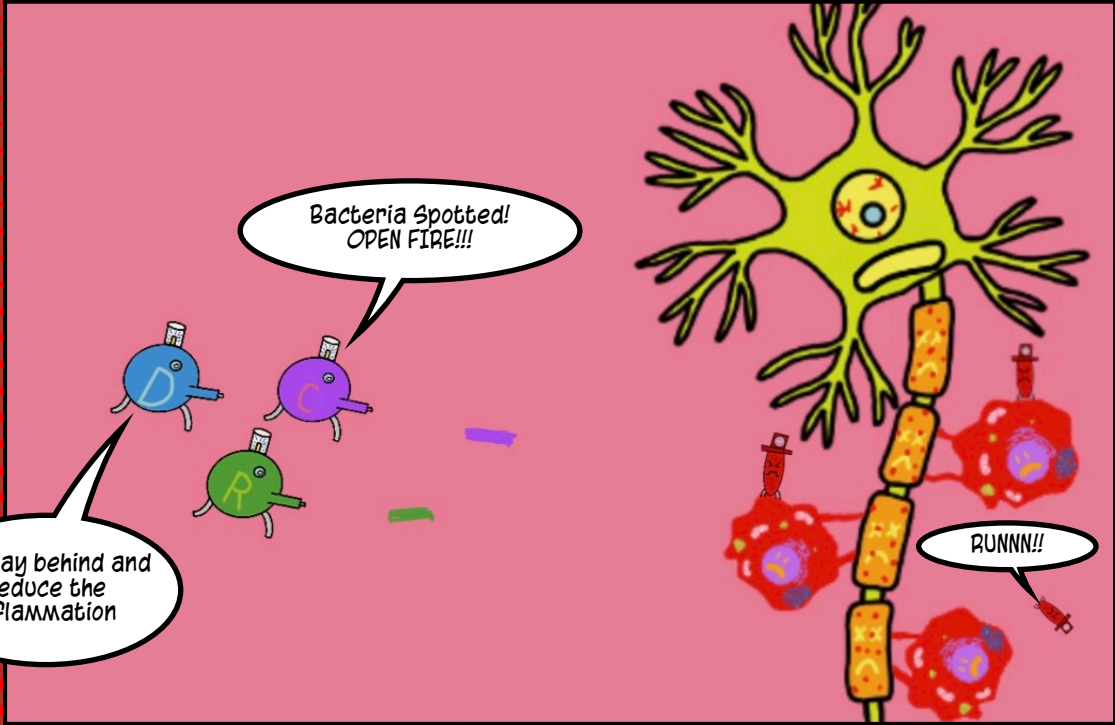
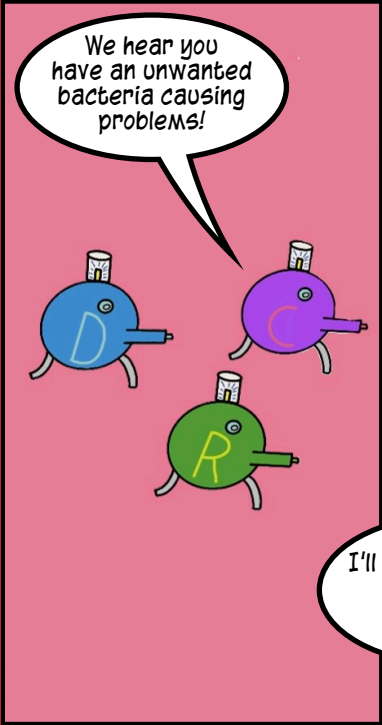




MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE THE BODY

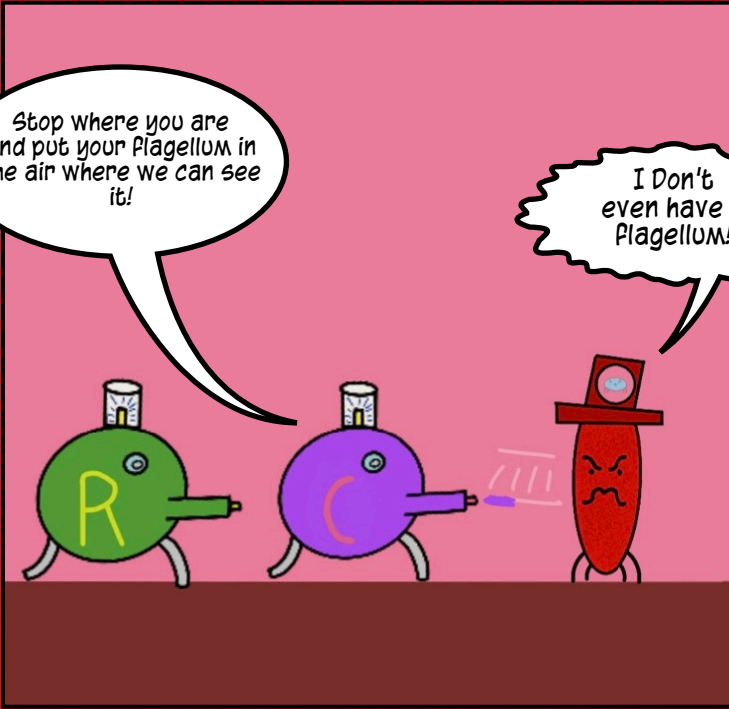


BACK INSIDE THE PERIPHERAL NERVOUS SYSTEM



I'll stay behind and reduce the inflammation

RUNNN!!



I Don't even have a Plagellum!

