

Tired Tiger

Category: House Calls and Home Care

written by Julia C. Spring | December 2, 2025

Twice Dr. Eddy made a house call because of me.

The first time was on a hot July day in 1953 when I, age seven, ran a fever during a polio outbreak. I didn't have the poliovirus—but a year later I got the vaccine before my big sisters did.

The other time was when I was nine and had the mumps. I asked Mommy to take down “the hanging thing in the hall”—which nobody else saw. She tried to take my temperature, and I bit off the thermometer, fortunately above the mercury bulb. I spit it out on her order.

Daddy called Dr. Eddy, who used his thermometer: 103. He asked me to bring my pointer finger to my nose. I poked myself in the eye.

Then he told me to repeat after him, “’Round the rugged rock the ragged rascal ran,” and I said, “’Round the rugged rock the tired tiger ran.” My sisters suppressed their laughter.

Dr. Eddy diagnosed mumps encephalitis. He and Daddy drank tea in the living room, waiting to see if my fever came down with aspirin and ice. If it didn't, I would have to go to the hospital.

Mommy changed the bed. I lay down on the clean sheets, and when she said I could get back on the pillow, I curled my whole body onto it, in a fetal position, and fell asleep with ice on my forehead.

After an hour or two had passed, they woke me up; my temperature was down to 99 and I seemed normal. Dr. Eddy left, telling my parents to call if I had a recurrence and to let him know how I was in the morning.

I doubt my parents slept well that night, but the tired tiger did.

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