Illustrated by Mark Huebner

Penny's
EGGS-im-ah
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This booklet was reviewed by Ronald Vender MD FRCPC, dermatologist, and his two sons Reid (9 years old) and Ross (7 years old who suffers from eczema).

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“Hi. I’m Penny, and I have a kind of rash called eczema. I get rashes, but you can’t get them if I touch you. They’re not catchy at all. Sometimes my skin itches and I scratch so much it hurts. But I do things to help my skin feel better. I put lotion on every day, so my skin doesn’t get dry. The doctor gives me special medicine for my rashes, too. It’s important for me to do what my doctor tells me, so my itch will go away. Eczema isn’t all bad, though. I get to play games to keep my hands busy, so I don’t scratch.

I have control over my eczema. But it wasn’t always this way. Here’s what happened when I first discovered my eczema.”
Penny is just like you. She goes to school. Plays with friends. And loves ice cream sundaes.

One hot, sunny day, she was doing what she loves to do most – digging for bugs in the garden – when she became very itchy. So Penny started to scratch. Penny kept digging – and scratching. And digging and scratching. It was starting to hurt, a lot.

“M oooommm!” she yelled as she ran into the house.
“Oh no, looks like another rash.
Is it really itchy?” her mom asked.

“Yeeeeessss!!” cried Penny.
“I’ve been scratching all day. And it won’t stop.”

“Don’t worry, sweetie.
I’ll make an appointment to see Dr. Wise.
She’ll get to the bottom of this.”

Tips for Parents
Sympathize with your child. Tell them you know how bad the itching is and how hard it is to stop. Comfort them. And make sure you keep your child’s nails cut short to minimize skin damage from scratching.
Penny had problems sleeping. She started to talk with Pro, her secret pal. To Penny's parents, Pro was just a stuffed toy. But to Penny, he was her expert on all things. Big and small. “I've got a big problem, Pro. It’s an itch that just won’t stop. And it’s getting painful!”

“I know!” Pro said, excited.

“Put a pair of socks on your hands. That way you won’t be able to scratch – no matter how bad it gets.”

She waited. But her hand got even itchier.

“I don’t think this is working, Pro,” said Penny.
how do rashes make you feel?

Draw a picture. Or ask your mom or dad to help you write down how your rash makes you feel.
Do you feel sad? Angry? Frustrated? Scared?
The terrible itching and scratching kept Penny up most of the night again. She also noticed that her neck was now red and itchy.

“I’m sorry, Penny. I wish I could help,” Pro said.

“Well, at least I’m seeing Dr. Wise today. She’ll be able to tell me what’s wrong,” Penny said to Pro.
Later that morning, Penny sat on the big examining table feeling a little bit scared - and itchy. Dr. Wise walked in. “So Penny, what brings you here today?” Penny held up her hand with the rash and said, “This!” “And this!” she exclaimed as she showed the rash on her neck. “Well,” said Dr. Wise, “It looks like you have a skin condition. You’ve probably had it for a while and never noticed it. It’s something we call atopic dermatitis.”
What’s that?” Penny wondered to herself. Dr. Wise smiled, and told her all of the things she needed to do to take care of her itchy skin. She gave Penny a special ointment for her rash. She handed Penny and her father some booklets. “You can read these. They explain a little more about your itchy skin and all the things you can do to feel better.”
what is EGGS-im-ah?

When they got home, Penny and Pro tried to figure out what the doctor had told her earlier that day. “Let’s look at those booklets Dr. Wise gave you and your dad today,” Pro said. Pro found a page that described Penny’s rashes and he started to explain: “You have eczema... EG G S-im-ah.” Penny repeated the word,

“EG G S-im-ah”

“Sometimes doctors call it atopic dermatitis, but all you need to remember is EG G S-im-ah,” said Pro.
The things that make you itchy are called 'triggers'. People can get rashes from their triggers, just like you. 

“But I just want to stop being itchy right now,” said Penny. 

“Well, look at this,” said Pro, “It's a list to help kids with eczema feel better. It's called a NO RASH list.” 

“Let's show my EG G S-im-ah who's boss!” Penny said, excited.

Tips for Parents
Post reminders about triggers and when to apply medicine, so your child can participate in their treatment plan. It’s important for your child to feel in control of their condition – right from the start.
your NO RASH list

‘N’ stands for Notice the tingling. A funny tingling feeling may happen before the itch starts. Let a parent know so that you can put medicine on the area.

‘O’ stands for Only cotton clothes. Only wear soft clothes made of cotton. Your mom and dad can help pick out the right stuff.

‘R’ stands for Rub on medicine. Put lotion on your skin every day, so it doesn’t get dry, and rub on any medicine your doctor gives you.

‘A’ stands for Avoid triggers. Try to avoid the things that give you rashes. Everyone’s triggers are different. Find out which ones affect you most.

‘S’ stands for Stay busy. Play games that keep your hands busy – like cards – or draw, so you won’t scratch as much. This can stop you from scratching, without even knowing it.

‘H’ stands for Have fun! Don’t let eczema stop you from playing sports, going on trips or spending time with your friends.
The next day, the itching wasn't as bad. Her hand was getting better. Penny slept better that night too. Now she knew what was wrong – and what to do to feel better. She was showing her eczema who was boss! She got out of bed and looked at her NO RASH list.

Tips for Parents
Prevent scratching by making sure your child’s hands are occupied. Play catch, a card or board game, or let your child play fun, educational computer games. It’s best to keep them focused on activities that won’t allow them to scratch.
taking control of eczema crossword

Help Penny think of all the things she needs to do and remember to be the boss of her eczema.

**Across**
3. You rub it on so your skin doesn't get dry.
5. Keep track of these, so you know what bothers your skin.
6. Your doctor gives you this to put on your rash.
8. You might wear these on your feet in the summer.
9. Your teacher gives you this to do at home.
11. Play these to keep your hands busy.

**Down**
1. You plug it in and it can cool you down.
2. You could wear this type of material to stay comfortable.
4. People you play with and see at school.
7. People put it on to smell nice and it might give you a rash.
10. Something you put on your head to protect you from the sun.

**Tips for Parents**
Help your child get ready for school by practicing their daily treatment routine and discussing how to handle rashes when they are away from home. It's also a good idea to talk to the teacher about your child's eczema. Let the teacher know what eczema is, and warn them that your child might be tired or irritable if they have been up at night scratching.

Created with Puzzlemaker on DiscoverySchool.com
**trigger tracker**

Track your triggers. Start by writing down what gives you a rash - every time it happens.
first day of school
Summer was over and the first day of school was here! And Penny wasn't scratching at all right now. The eczema on her hand was hardly noticeable. And the eczema on her neck was not itchy or red, as it had been before. Penny had started to keep track of her triggers:

dust, sweat, dogs, being upset, dirt

Her mom helped her put on a new outfit that they had bought the previous week - all cotton and very comfortable.
Penny was very excited as she got on the school bus. The first day of school was here! Penny saw an empty seat at the back of the bus. She sat down and said to the boy across from her,

“Hi! I'm Penny.”

“Hi! My name’s Max,” said the boy.

Max noticed her rash.

“Ew! Gross!”
Max said loudly as he made a face.
Everyone began to take notice.
Penny was upset, but she didn't want to cry.
“He's SOOOO mean,” she thought to herself.
Then someone sat down beside Penny. It was Darren, a nice boy from the third grade. He had played catch with Penny in the summer.

“I could hear them making fun of you because of your rash,” said Darren. “Did you know that I have eczema too?”

“Really? How did you get better?” asked Penny.

“I followed the NO RASH list that my doctor gave me,” Darren answered, “and when the medicine started working, my rashes got better.”

Penny felt better. Maybe she could be the boss of her eczema, just like Darren.

Tips for Parents
Unfortunately, children with eczema can be teased. Discuss with your child how they should respond to teasing - and come up with a plan of action that will make them feel better. You might want to ask your child’s teacher to watch for teasing.
Pro was happy now that Penny was happy.
She knew someone else who had eczema, and had stood up to it over time.
Darren had given Penny more hope.
“Thanks, Pro. You’ve helped me deal with this eczema.”
“You’re getting better on your own,” said Pro.
“You are taking control of your eczema.”

later at school
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“Thanks, Pro. You’ve helped me deal with this eczema.”
“You’re getting better on your own,” said Pro.
“You are taking control of your eczema.”
Notice the tingling
Only cotton clothes
Rub on medicine
and lotion
Avoid triggers
Stay busy
Have fun!

Colour in your own NO RASH list, cut it out and put it up in your room.