

---

# Understanding Childhood Eczema



**PENNY TITMAN**

Consultant Clinical Psychologist



# Understanding Childhood Eczema

## Understanding Illness and Health

Many health problems and worries are strongly influenced by our thoughts and feelings. These exciting new books, written by experts in the psychology of health, are essential reading for sufferers, their families and friends.

Each book presents objective, easily understood information and advice about what the problem is, the treatments available and, most importantly, how your state of mind can help or hinder the way you cope. You will discover how to have a positive, hopeful outlook, which will help you choose the most effective treatment for you and your particular lifestyle, with confidence.

The series is edited by JANE OGDEN, Reader in Health Psychology, Guy's, King's and St Thomas' School of Medicine, King's College London, UK

### *Titles in the series*

KAREN BALLARD    Understanding Menopause

SIMON DARNLEY & BARBARA MILLAR    Understanding Irritable Bowel Syndrome

LINDA PAPADOPOULOS & CARL WALKER    Understanding Skin Problems

PENNY TITMAN    Understanding Childhood Eczema

---

# Understanding Childhood Eczema



**PENNY TITMAN**

Consultant Clinical Psychologist

Copyright © 2003

John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester,  
West Sussex PO19 8SQ, England

Telephone (+44) 1243 779777

Email (for orders and customer service enquiries): [cs-books@wiley.co.uk](mailto:cs-books@wiley.co.uk)

Visit our Home Page on [www.wileyeurope.com](http://www.wileyeurope.com) or [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com)

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except under the terms of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of a licence issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4LP, UK, without the permission in writing of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 8SQ, England, or emailed to [permreq@wiley.co.uk](mailto:permreq@wiley.co.uk), or faxed to (+44) 1243 770620.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold on the understanding that the Publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

### ***Other Wiley Editorial Offices***

John Wiley & Sons Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, USA

Jossey-Bass, 989 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103-1741, USA

Wiley-VCH Verlag GmbH, Boschstr. 12, D-69469 Weinheim, Germany

John Wiley & Sons Australia Ltd, 33 Park Road, Milton, Queensland 4064, Australia

John Wiley & Sons (Asia) Pte Ltd, 2 Clementi Loop #02-01, Jin Xing Distripark, Singapore 129809

John Wiley & Sons Canada Ltd, 22 Worcester Road, Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada M9W 1L1

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

### ***Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data***

Titman, Penny.

Understanding childhood eczema / Penny Titman.

p. ; cm. – (Understanding illness and health)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-470-84759-X (paper : alk. paper)

1. Eczema in children – Popular works.

[DNLM: 1. Eczema – therapy – Popular Works. 2.

Eczema – psychology – Popular Works. WR 190 T619u 2003] I. Title. II.

Understanding illness & health.

RJ516.E35T55 2003

618.92'521 – dc21

2003001376

### ***British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data***

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0-470-84759-X

Illustrations by Jason Broadbent

Typeset in 9.5/13pt Photina by Laserwords Private Limited, Chennai, India

Printed and bound in Great Britain by TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

This book is printed on acid-free paper responsibly manufactured from sustainable forestry in which at least two trees are planted for each one used for paper production.

# Contents

About the author vii

Acknowledgements ix

- 1** What is eczema? 1
- 2** What is the best treatment for eczema? 9
- 3** The impact of eczema on your child and on the family 29
- 4** Understanding and managing scratching 43
- 5** Understanding and managing sleep problems 59
- 6** Understanding and managing diet for your child with eczema 71
- 7** Managing teasing and improving your child's self-esteem 79
- 8** Growing up with eczema 91

Useful addresses and contacts 99

Recommended further reading 103

Index 105





# About the author

DR PENNY TITMAN trained as a clinical psychologist at University College London and has since specialised in working with children and their families. She has extensive experience of working with children with physical health problems, including skin conditions, as well as in child mental health services. Dr Titman carried out a special study of the impact of eczema and other skin conditions on the wellbeing of children and families and this work formed the basis of her PhD. She currently works as a consultant clinical psychologist in a community team for children and families in an NHS Trust.



# Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Dr Jane Ogden, editor of this series, for her encouragement to write this book and for her helpful comments and feedback.

I have learned a lot about the impact of childhood eczema from the families who kindly agreed to participate in interviews for my PhD. I am very grateful to them for telling me about their experiences of caring for their children. In addition, after I had started my research on skin conditions, my oldest son developed severe eczema while he was a baby. My own personal experience of caring for him has helped me to understand the impact of eczema on young children and their families.

The names and other identifying details in all the case material and quotations in this book have been altered in order to protect the identity of those involved.

