

## Trichotillomania Facts

- Trichotillomania is compulsive hair pulling from the scalp, eyelashes, eyebrows, face or anywhere there is hair
- Patterns of hair loss include: patchy areas, complete baldness, or a tonsure pattern similar to "Friar Tuck"
- Trichotillomania affects about 1 in 50 people
- Trichotillomania affects people of all backgrounds and personalities
- Trichotillomania is a disorder, not something one "can just stop doing"
- Trichotillomania often causes shame, isolation, and secrecy for many sufferers
- Hair pullers may hide their problem with wigs, false eyelashes, scarves, hats, special hairstyles, or make-up
- Treatment and support are available at [www.bfrb.org](http://www.bfrb.org)



## You Can Help

The TLC Foundation for Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviors (BFRBs) Service Provider Referral list puts professional cosmetologists and estheticians in touch with a large client base desperately seeking caring and knowledgeable personal service providers.

Visit [bfrb.org](http://bfrb.org) and sign up today!

## About Us

The TLC Foundation for Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviors is the world's leading authority on hair pulling, skin picking, and related disorders. Guided by a Scientific Advisory Board of the foremost clinical and research professionals in the field, we take a comprehensive approach to helping people overcome their disorder and heal.

Our approach includes: creating a community of support for affected individuals; providing referrals to treatment specialists and resources; training professionals to recognize and treat BFRBs; and directing research into its causes, treatment, and prevention.



THE TLC  
FOUNDATION

for Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviors


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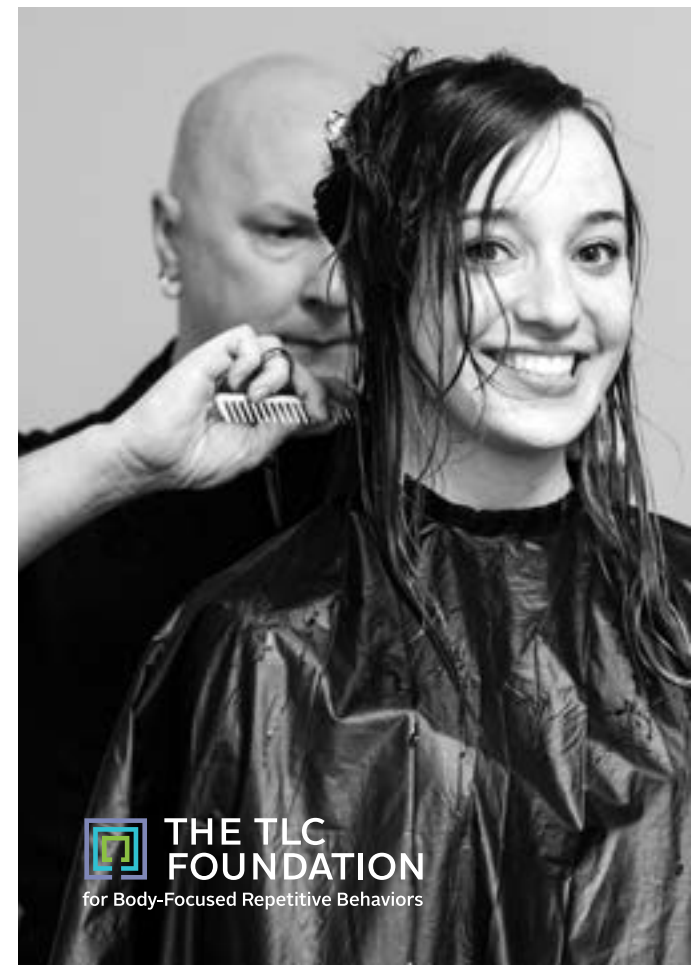
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[www.bfrb.org](http://www.bfrb.org)

  
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# Trichotillomania: *A Cosmetologist's Guide to a Common Cause of Hair Loss*



  
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## The best-kept secret

As a cosmetologist, you often hear about your clients' daily frustrations and intimate secrets. But there is one common problem they are likely to hide from you – a problem that keeps countless other people away from salons altogether. Once you understand this problem, you will become a resource for many others who would love to enjoy your services.

**The problem is trichotillomania.  
(trick-o-till-o-mania).**

Trichotillomania (TTM or “trich”) is a body-focused repetitive disorder that causes people to pull out the hair from their scalp, eyelashes, eyebrows, or any other parts of the body, resulting in bald patches. Hair pulling varies greatly in its severity and responsiveness to treatment.

Trichotillomania is a very common problem, affecting 2-3% of the population – or 1 or 2 people out of every 50.

## Why would anyone pull out their hair?

We've all seen images of frenzied people grabbing at their hair: “I'm so upset, I'm going to tear my hair out!” This is not the picture of trichotillomania. Imagine a problem much more like nail biting. People with trichotillomania generally pull their hair out absentmindedly, while doing other things like reading or watching TV, or while lost in thought.

No one knows exactly what causes trichotillomania, but there is evidence it is partly a genetic disorder. It may help some people regulate their emotions – that is, cope with anxiety or even boredom.

People with trichotillomania are not trying to injure themselves or to purposefully damage their appearance. Though hair pulling sounds like it would be painful, many report that it actually feels good. In fact, the pleasurable feelings contribute to their difficulty in stopping the behavior. Others describe the sensation as similar to scratching an itch, providing a feeling of relief. Still others report that it is painful, but feel compelled to pull anyway.

## What does trichotillomania look like?

Hair pulling can result in thin hair, bald spots, loss of eyelashes or eyebrows, and even total baldness. It is not possible to identify trichotillomania simply based on the appearance of a bald spot - bald spots caused by alopecia can look very similar.

As with alopecia, the bald spots may come and go, if the disorder goes in and out of remission.

Whether mild or severe, this cosmetic damage can be devastating to a person's self-image, just as hair loss caused by alopecia or cancer treatment, or even normal balding, can hurt a person's self-esteem. With trichotillomania, there are often additional strong feelings of shame and self-blame.

## Treatment

Trichotillomania often responds well to cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). Certain medication can sometimes provide relief, but are used less frequently with children than with adults. Support groups can also be of great help to sufferers and their families.

***Request our booklet “Expert Consensus Treatment Guidelines” for more detailed information.***



## How can cosmetologists help?

Imagine how you would want someone to react if you had this problem. Most likely, you would want to be given privacy, understanding, and a great style!

A few suggestions:

- Be sensitive and compassionate.
- Allow time for the client to build trust with you.
- Invite clients to talk about their hair loss but do not force or prolong the conversation.
- Schedule appointments for a time and place to maximize privacy. Ask your clients about what level of privacy they desire.
- Minimize the number of people involved in the styling process.
- Be careful not to wash-off eye or eyebrow make-up when washing hair.
- Do not call attention to hair loss by calling other stylists or clients over to examine a bald spot.
- Do not advise your client to stop pulling. Your client would stop pulling if he or she could.
- Have our brochures available so that you can discretely offer your client more information about how to get help. Your clients may not even know the name of their problem or that help is available.
- Join our referral list of cosmetologists.

Sharing knowledge.

Supporting recovery.

Finding a cure.

>>> **bfrb.org**