If you or someone you love is suffering from body-focused repetitive behaviors (BFRBs), you may feel alone, confused, and in need of help. By visiting this website, you are already on a good path to healing by reaching out for more information. There are many tools that can help one recover from these problems. So take a deep breath, relax, and know that we are here to support you!

This guide includes basic information on treatment, finding resources and support, and the services we provide.

We understand that if you are new to BFRBs, information about these disorders can feel overwhelming. A good place to start is by following the quick links below. Then review the rest of this guide for more in-depth information.

**How are body-focused repetitive behaviors treated?**

*Read the Expert Consensus Treatment Guidelines*

**How can I find a therapist?**

*Find a treatment provider*

**My child is pulling or picking and I need help!**

*Resources for parents*

If you need more information, please don’t hesitate to email info@bfrb.org or call us at 831-457-1004. Our office is open 9:00am - 3:00pm PT, Monday - Thursday.

We’ll check back in a couple of weeks to see if you have any questions.

Warmest wishes,

Your friends at

The TLC Foundation for BFRBs
What are Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviors?

Body-focused repetitive behavior (BFRB) is an umbrella term for a group of related disorders including hair pulling, skin picking, cheek biting, nail biting, or similar behaviors. These behaviors are not habits or tics; rather, they are complex disorders that cause people to repeatedly touch their hair and body in ways that result in physical damage. These behaviors are all considered BFRBs because they share similar characteristics. The difference between normal grooming behaviors and a BFRB arises when the behavior(s) cause substantial personal distress and/or interfere with daily functioning.

The best research suggests that 3% or more of the population lives with a BFRB – that’s over 10 million people in North America alone – yet they often go undiagnosed and untreated, causing shame and isolation.

Symptoms tend to begin around puberty, and may come and go over time, but usually require intervention to achieve lasting remission. Women have a greater chance of being affected than men. The causes are not fully understood, but evidence shows that these disorders are often hereditary.

How are BFRBs Treated?

The Scientific Advisory Board of The TLC Foundation for Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviors is made up of clinicians and researchers working at the forefront of BFRB treatment. The Board recommends one begin their path to recovery by developing a solid understanding of their behavior and finding the emotional support they will need to address it. Patients and their healthcare providers can then consider the psychological interventions, medications, and other therapies that have proven effective in helping people achieve remission.

Click here to search our directory of qualified treatment providers >>

**Recommended Reading**

Free Articles on bfrb.org:
- Self-Help Strategies for BFRBs
- Toddler & Preschool Hair Pulling
- N-acetylcysteine for Trichotillomania, Skin Picking, and Nail Biting

Recommended Books
- The Hair Pulling Habit and You - A Workbook for Kids and Parents
- Skin Picking: The Freedom to Finally Stop
- Treatments that Work: Acceptance & Commitment Therapy for Trichotillomania

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**

Research supports certain forms of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) as treatment for BFRB. Recently published research showed that CBT is the most effective treatment overall. Often, an individualized combination of treatment approaches is helpful.

**Medication**

No medication is currently approved by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) for treatment of BFRBs, though a few have proven to reduce symptoms in some individuals. Medications may also be useful in treating co-existing problems such as anxiety or depression. Medications are often used to lessen feelings or sensations that can increase picking or pulling rather than treat the disorder itself.

For more information on treatment and medications, download our booklet “Expert Consensus Treatment Guidelines”
Education and Support

If you or someone you love is affected by BFRBs:

Read our booklet, Expert Consensus Treatment Guidelines, for specific information on what BFRBs are, how they are treated, and how to find help. You may also access free articles on treatment, self-help, and BFRBs in children. Are you a teen or young adult? We have a special section of on our website just for you. Check it out here >>

Support for affected individuals and families

Local support groups
Online support groups

Referrals to mental health treatment providers & service providers

Find a treatment provider
Find a salon, cosmetologist, or other provider
Find online programs and other BFRB services

What can families and friends do to help?
To be a supportive, helpful, and fully invested resource, it is important that you are strong, informed, empathic, and calm when helping your loved one. Well-meaning friends and family members often wish to be helpful, yet at times their efforts can actually be hurtful and may even contribute to the problem. Maintaining a supportive role, sensitive and effective communication, patience, and flexibility can be very important for family members who are attempting to help an individual with a BFRB. It is also important to take care of yourself as you try to support and assist your affected loved one. Books, self-help groups, and other resources are available to family members who need extra support.
How We Help

Services We Provide
Information and resources on www.bfrb.org
Our website offers free comprehensive information about BFRBs including resource articles and videos on treatment and self help, personal stories of recovery and healing, and specific information for parents and teens. Visit the Resource Library.

BFRB.org also offers books on hair pulling and skin picking for sale, as well as selected fiddles and fidgets to help with controlling urges. Visit the bfrb.org store.

Attend an event

The Annual Conference on Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviors is the only event of its kind in the world. The world’s top BFRB experts, community leaders and changemakers will guide nearly 500 of us -- individuals, families, and treatment providers -- through a weekend of education, inspiration, support, and most importantly, healing. Learn more.

Regional Workshops take place several times a year at various locations in the US, Canada and the UK. Featuring community leaders and regional treatment experts, workshops are a great opportunity to learn more about these disorders and connect with local support. Find a local workshop.

Webinars are online events held throughout the year, that cover a wide range of topics such as the latest advances in treatment and medications, research news and updates, or helpful parenting techniques. Listen to - and ask questions of - leading experts in this field. Live webinars and the webinar archive are FREE for Members. Nonmembers may attend webinars for only $10 each. Learn more.

Clinician Training
The foundation hosts two Professional Training Institutes for licensed clinicians each year. These 3-day intensive training programs offer instruction in evidence-based cognitive behavioral therapy treatment protocols for body-focused repetitive behaviors. Alternatively, a DVD training program is also available. Learn more.

Educational Publications
A list of current publications is available upon request. Brochures for distribution to schools, doctors, therapists, etc. may be ordered from our website. Order brochures.

TLC Email Announcements
A free email service that alerts subscribers to breaking news in the field: research advances, media coverage, new publications, and regional events. Sign up here.

Public Education and Awareness
We work at the national level to raise the profile of BFRBs through educational mailings, media contact, participation at medical conferences, and strategic alliances. Help raise awareness.

Leading Research into BFRBs
The TLC Foundation for BFRBs has been the trusted leader in BFRB education, advocacy, and research for over 20 years. In April 2014, the foundation launched the BFRB Precision Medicine (BPM) Initiative, bringing the cutting edge approach of precision medicine to the goal of finding new, more effective treatments for BFRBs. Precision medicine uses behavioral, genetic, and biological indicators to describe an individual pattern of disease in order to develop individualized treatments. It has revolutionized cancer treatment, and our national team of scientists are bringing this same approach to BFRB research. Learn more about BPM.
Get Involved

If you or someone you love is affected by a BFRB:

Join the TLC community. The TLC Foundation for BFRBs is a donor-supported nonprofit organization. The life-changing programs we offer are available thanks to people like you, supporting this vital work. Membership provides access to our extensive online resource library and free webinars. Your tax-deductible support ensures that The TLC Foundation for BFRBs can continue providing outreach and educational services for these disorders, support recovery, and find a cure. Please join us.

If you are a clinician who treats individuals with BFRBs or wishes to learn more about treatment:

Join our referral listings and help provide patients access to treatment. Read our publications and attend our training programs to improve your ability to identify and effectively treat hair pulling, skin picking, and related body-focused repetitive behaviors. Learn to recognize the signs of BFRBs and how to treat them.

If you are a researcher:

Become a Professional Member and stay up-to-date on the latest research and treatment developments. Participate in breaking new ground in the treatment of body-focused repetitive behaviors—a category of disorders on the obsessive-compulsive spectrum affecting at least 3% of the population. Partner with leading scientists from around the world on truly cutting-edge research.

If you are a cosmetologist, esthetician, dermatologist, or other personal care provider:

Become a Service Provider Member. Going to the cosmetologist or esthetician, or other care provider is one of the day-to-day necessities that can be made emotionally difficult by BFRBs. Help alleviate this problem by joining a network of BFRB-friendly service salons, cosmetologists, estheticians, and other personal care providers.

More ways to help:

Share your story: Inspire others and give hope by sharing your personal BFRB story.

Give a presentation at your school or for a community group.

Shop for the cause: Amazon.com and many other sites will donate a portion of proceeds to TLC.

“The support and community provided by the TLC Foundation have not only helped me feel better about myself, but also find a level of recovery from BFRBs that I never thought was possible.”

CHRISTINA LANG | Member