Trichotillomania Causes, Symptoms & Treatment

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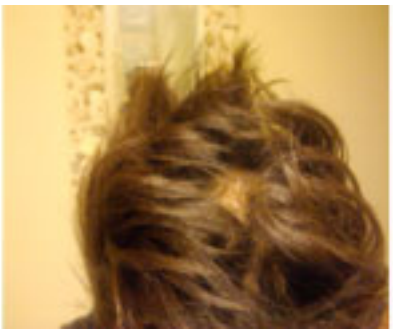
Saved From: http://www.perfectlocks.com/faq/article/trichotillomania-causes-symptoms-treatment

Through spreading awareness, in helping others who still suffer from Trichotillomania, and may still believe they are the "only one".



Felicia Wills is a TTM sufferer and these are her examples. Also known as a Friar Tuck sign; a balding pate surrounded by a fringe of hair.

1. About the condition

Trichotillomania, AKA; "TTM" or "Trich" for short, is an impulse control disorder to pull out one's hair. The condition typically begins in children around age 12. The possible causes for TTM are being researched, but like most disorders, it probably results from a combination of genetics & environmental factors. Frequently, a stressful event can be associated with the onset, such as: change of schools, abuse, family conflict, or the death of a parent. The symptoms also may be triggered by pubertal hormonal changes. It is estimated to affect one to two percent of the population, or four to eleven million Americans.

2. Diagnosing the condition

Most people with trichotillomania pull hair from their scalp, especially the crown. Some also pull from the eyebrows, eyelashes, and other parts of the body. Most people pull hair with their fingers, but sometimes use tweezers. For some people, hair pulling is intentional and focused. Other people pull their hair unconsciously.

Signs and symptoms of trichotillomania may include:

- Playing in hair and twirling strands around the fingers
- Recurrent pulling out of one"s hair resulting in noticeable hair loss
- Patchy bald areas on the scalp or other areas of your body
- Sparse or missing eyelashes or eyebrows
- Chewing or eating pulled-out hair
- Playing with pulled-out hair
- Rubbing pulled-out hair across the lips or face
- An increasing sense of tension immediately before pulling out the hair or when resisting the behavior

- Pleasure, gratification, or relief when pulling out the hair
- The disturbance is not accounted for by another mental disorder and is not due to a general medical condition (i.e., dermatological condition)
- The disturbance causes significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning

3. Battling the condition from the sufferer's perspective

The persistence of the compulsion can vary considerably both from person to person and by occurrence to occurrence. At times it can be controlled with extra awareness and concentration, and at times the urge may be so strong that it becomes compulsive. Those afflicted with TTM go to great lengths to cover bald spots on their heads or missing eyelashes, and eyebrows with hairstyles, scarves, clothing, or makeup.

Because TTM was not in the public media in the United States until about 1989, many people with TTM have gone for many years without adequate information about their condition, or appropriate treatment. Self esteem is damaged and shame keeps them from reaching out for help. This is why TTM Awareness is so imperative!

4. Possible remedies and or cures

Of all the disorders belonging to the OCD family, trichotillomania is probably one of the least understood by both sufferers and practitioners alike. It has also been, for many years, among the most frustrating and difficult to treat for all parties concerned.

There is no known cure for TTM. However, a wide range of treatment options are available to including: Hypnosis, Herbal Therapy, Psychiatric Drug Therapy Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Trichotillomania Support Groups, Self Esteem workshops, Relaxation Techniques and lots of will power.

5. A success story

Recently, I entered a contest and by sharing my story, I won 8 oz of 18â€• beautiful machine weft wavy Indian Hair from Perfect Locks!

National Trichotillomania Awareness week is the first week in October and I thought it''d be a great time to come forward and tell you my story so I can possibly help someone else who may be suffering the same.

Felicia Wills and I am one of the many faces of Trichotillomania. Also known as TTM, by definition, it is an impulse control disorder to pull one's hair resulting in bald patches.

I acquired these symptoms around the age of 10 and by middle school I wore a different color bandanna everyday to match my outfits and cover my head. It wasn't funny then but it got snatched off a lot as you can imagine and having to cover my hair and be teased crushed my self esteem and made me feel less attractive for years to come.

I started wearing sewn in, Indian hair weaves, using a net to cover bald spots, over ten years ago. Over the years, quality, reliability, reasonable pricing and compassionate customer service has been very hard to find. As a Cosmetologist, I hold particularly high standards when it comes to both quality hair and great customer

service!

There is no cure for TTM, therefore, I need reliable, dependable hair that lasts so I can keep my natural hair covered to discourage pulling and promote healthy, even growth. Perfect Locks has provided me with hair I love for the quality and durabilityâ€¦hair that boosts my confidence and makes me feel amazing.

Many people suffering in silence with TTM still believe they are the "only one.â€• I hope that those afflicted by this, and other hair loss ailments will take this opportunity to gain an understanding of your condition, get the help and support you deserve and feel great about yourself!

Remember, National Trichotillomania Awareness week is the first week in October. Perfect Locks cares and they can help! They certainly did wonders for me! Call or click! And discover your new you!

Article written by Felicia Wills

Resources:

Trichotillomania Learning Center: http://www.trich.org
TrichWorld: http://trichworld.ning.com
The Mayo Clinic: http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/trichotillomania
COGNITIVE/BEHAVIORAL TREATMENT OF TRICHOTILLOMANIA By Fred Penzel, Ph.D.
http://westsuffolkpsych.homestead.com