

## Self-harm

URL of this page: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/selfharm.html>

Self-harm refers to a person's harming their own body on purpose. About 1 in 100 people hurts himself or herself in this way. More females hurt themselves than males. A person who self-harms usually does not mean to kill himself or herself. But they are at higher risk of attempting suicide if they do not get help.

Self-harm tends to begin in teen or early adult years. Some people may engage in self-harm a few times and then stop. Others engage in it more often and have trouble stopping.

Examples of self-harm include

- Cutting yourself (such as using a razor blade, knife, or other sharp object to cut the skin)
- Punching yourself or punching things (like a wall)
- Burning yourself with cigarettes, matches, or candles
- Pulling out your hair
- Poking objects through body openings
- Breaking your bones or bruising yourself

Many people cut themselves because it gives them a sense of relief. Some people use cutting as a means to cope with a problem. Some teens say that when they hurt themselves, they are trying to stop feeling lonely, angry, or hopeless.

It is possible to overcome the urge to hurt yourself. There are other ways to find relief and cope with your emotions. Counseling may help.

*Dept. of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health*

### Start Here

- Self-Harm and Trauma [<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/self-harm.asp>] (National Center for PTSD)

### Overviews

- Self-Injury in Adolescents [[http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts\\_for\\_families/selfinjury\\_in\\_adolescents](http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/selfinjury_in_adolescents)] (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)  
Also available in Spanish  
[[http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Facts\\_for\\_Families/Facts\\_for\\_Families\\_Pages/Spanish/EI\\_Infligirse\\_Heridas\\_en\\_Los\\_Adolescentes\\_73.aspx](http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/Facts_for_Families_Pages/Spanish/EI_Infligirse_Heridas_en_Los_Adolescentes_73.aspx)]
- Self-Injury/Cutting [<http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/self-injury/DS00775/DSECTION=all&METHOD=print>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

### Latest News

- Bullied Kids More Likely to Self-Harm as Teens  
[[http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory\\_137378.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_137378.html)] (05/31/2013, HealthDay)

### Treatment

- Mental Health Medications [<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/mental-health-medications/complete-index.shtml>] **NIH** (National Institute of Mental Health)
- Psychotherapies [<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/psychotherapies/index.shtml>] **NIH** (National Institute of Mental Health)

of Mental Health)

## Specific Conditions

- Cutting [[http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/mental\\_health/cutting.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/mental_health/cutting.html)] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also available in Spanish [[http://kidshealth.org/teen/en\\_espanol/mente/cutting\\_esp.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/en_espanol/mente/cutting_esp.html)]
- Trichotillomania (Hair-Pulling Disorder)  
[<http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/trichotillomania/DS00895/DSECTION=all&METHOD=print>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

## Related Issues

- How Can I Help a Friend Who Cuts? [[http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/friends/friend\\_cuts.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/friends/friend_cuts.html)] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also available in Spanish [[http://kidshealth.org/teen/en\\_espanol/mente/friend\\_cuts\\_esp.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/en_espanol/mente/friend_cuts_esp.html)]

## Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov. Self-Injurious Behavior [<http://clinicaltrials.gov/search/open/condition=%22Self-Injurious+Behavior%22>] **NIH** (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov. Trichotillomania [<http://clinicaltrials.gov/search/open/condition=%22Trichotillomania%22>] **NIH** (National Institutes of Health)

## Research

- Girls with ADHD at Risk for Self-Injury, Suicide Attempts as Young Adults  
[<http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2012/08/girls-adhd.aspx>] (American Psychological Association)

## Journal Articles

### References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Method choice in nonfatal self-harm as a predictor of subsequent...  
[<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23597351?tool=MedlinePlus>]
- Article: Characteristics of non-fatal self-poisoning in Sri Lanka: a systematic review.  
[<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23575389?tool=MedlinePlus>]
- Article: A child in mind. [<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23495592?tool=MedlinePlus>]
- Self-harm -- see more articles [[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=self+injurious+behavior\[majr:noexp\]+OR+self+mutilation\[majr\]+AND+english\[la\]+AND+humans\[mh\]+AND+\(jsubsetk\[text\]+OR+review\[pt\]+OR+guideline\[pt\]+OR+clinical+trial\[pt\]+OR+patient+education+handout\[pt\]+OR+jsubsetaim\[text\]+OR+jsubsetn\[text\]\)+NOT+\(letter\[pt\]+OR+editorial\[pt\]+OR+case+reports\[pt\]\)+AND+%22last+2+Years%22\[edat\]&tool=MedlinePlus](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=self+injurious+behavior[majr:noexp]+OR+self+mutilation[majr]+AND+english[la]+AND+humans[mh]+AND+(jsubsetk[text]+OR+review[pt]+OR+guideline[pt]+OR+clinical+trial[pt]+OR+patient+education+handout[pt]+OR+jsubsetaim[text]+OR+jsubsetn[text])+NOT+(letter[pt]+OR+editorial[pt]+OR+case+reports[pt])+AND+%22last+2+Years%22[edat]&tool=MedlinePlus)]

## Directories

- Mental Health Treatment Program Locator  
[<http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/MHTreatmentLocator/faces/quickSearch.jspx>] (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)
- Psychologist Locator [<http://locator.apa.org/>] (American Psychological Association)

## Organizations

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry [<http://www.aacap.org/>]
- KidsHealth [<http://kidshealth.org/>] (Nemours Foundation)
- National Institute of Mental Health [<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>] **NIH**

## Children

- Hair Pulling (Trichotillomania) [[http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts\\_for\\_families/hair\\_pulling\\_trichotillomania](http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/hair_pulling_trichotillomania)] (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)

## Teenagers

- Cutting and Hurting Yourself [<http://www.girlshealth.gov/feelings/sad/cutting.html>] (Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health)
- How Can I Stop Cutting? [[http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/problems/resisting\\_cutting.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/problems/resisting_cutting.html)] (Nemours Foundation)
- Trichotillomania [[http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/mental\\_health/trichotillomania.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/mental_health/trichotillomania.html)] (Nemours Foundation)

## Patient Handouts

- Trichotillomania [<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001517.htm>]  
Also available in Spanish [<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/article/001517.htm>]

## You may also be interested in these related encyclopedia pages:

- Trichotillomania [<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001517.htm>]

## You may also be interested in these related MedlinePlus topics:

- Child Behavior Disorders [<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/childbehaviordisorders.html>]
- Suicide [<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/suicide.html>]
- Teen Mental Health [<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/teenmentalhealth.html>]
- Mental Health and Behavior [<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/mentalhealthandbehavior.html>]

The primary NIH organization for research on *Self-harm* is the National Institute of Mental Health [<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>]

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