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


Overviews

  Also available in Spanish
  [http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/Facts_for_Families_Pages/Spanish/EI_Infligrse_Heridas_en_los_Adolescentes_73.aspx]
- Self-Injury/Cutting [http://www mayo clinic com/print/self-injury/DS00775/DSECTION=all&METH OD=print] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Latest News

- Bullied Kids More Likely to Self-Harm as Teens

Treatment

of Mental Health)

**Specific Conditions**

- Cutting [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]
- Trichotillomania (Hair-Pulling Disorder) [http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/trichotillomania/DS00895/DSECTION=all&METHOD=print] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

**Related Issues**

  Also available in Spanish [http://kidshealth.org/teen/en_espanol/mente/friend_cuts_esp.html]

**Clinical Trials**

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Trichotillomania [http://clinicaltrials.gov/search/open/condition=%22Trichotillomania%22] NIH (National Institutes of Health)

**Research**


**Journal Articles**

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


**Directories**

- Mental Health Treatment Program Locator [http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/MHTreatmentLocator/faces/quickSearch.jsp] (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**

Teenagers

- Cutting and Hurting Yourself [http://www.girlshealth.gov/feelings/sad/cutting.html] (Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health)
- Trichotillomania [http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/mental_health/trichotillomania.html] (Nemours Foundation)

Patient Handouts

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

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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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