

mywellbeing

Pulling out your hair from stress?

► Hair Club helps highlight trichotillomania, an often-overlooked medical condition caused by anxiety ► Upcoming conference to educate sufferers

Ashley Rich knew there was something wrong in the way she dealt with stress. But she just didn't know that it was a medical condition until, coincidentally, she got a job as a hair restoration consultant at the Hair Club location in Louisville, Ky. She found a flyer there that talked about trichotillomania, obsessive-compulsive hair-pulling. Most sufferers pull hair from the scalp, resulting in bald patches that can cover the complete head in severe cases. It can also involve

Quoted

"It doesn't add to the anxiety that feeds the condition, so it doesn't add to whatever was going on that led to this happening in the first place."

ASHLEY RICH, ON HOW HAIR CLUB BOOSTS SELF-CONFIDENCE

other body hair.

"I knew I was doing something that was not a good way to deal with stress," Rich says. "But I had no idea what it was and that it had a name — or how common it is."

This month, Rich shares her story at the annual Trichotillomania Learning Conference in San Francisco (April 29 through May 1). Hair Club, a sponsor, is perhaps best known through infomercials advertising services for balding men, but the company serves in

many areas of hair loss. Hair Club can't deal with underlying psychological problems that might prompt trichotillomania, but hair replacement using natural-looking Bio-Matrix hairpieces gives invaluable moral support. Rich thinks the hairpieces helped her break the hair-pulling habit, too: "It doesn't have the same sensation as pulling your real hair. You stop having that urge to pull."

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► A trichotillomania sufferer before and after her Hair Club treatment.