

Introduction

People with the disorder pica eat items that have no nutritional value or eat relatively harmless items such as ice metal, etc.

This disorder occurs most often with children, pregnant women and people whom have instinctual disabilities. It's long lasting with higher severity.



What is pica?

Pica is an eating disorder defined as persistent ingestion of non nutritional substances over a month period, this behaviour is developmentally inappropriate, it may benign at a certain age and have life threatening consequences.



Sign and symptoms

Food that contain toxins or bacteria, causes:

- Stomach upset, Stomach pain.
- Blood in stool, Bowel problem.
- Lead poisoning., Dental injuries
- Insomnia.



Causes

There's no single cause of pica.

- 1-Deficiency in iron, or another nutrient may be associated with pica.
- 2- Certain mental health conditions, such as schizophrenia and (OCD).
- 3- Some people may even enjoy and crave the texture or flavour of certain nonfooditems.
- 4-Insome cultures, eating clay is accepted behaviour. This form of pica is called geophagia.

Treatment

- 1- Treating any complications acquired from eating non food items.
- 2- Treat any nutrient imbalances they may prescribe vitamin or mineral supplements
- 3- Psychological evaluation to determine if you have OCD or another mental health condition. Until recently, research hasn't focused on medication to help people with pica, simple multivitamin supplement may be an effective treatment in some cases.

References

- <https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/914765-overview/>
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/pica>