

WHAT IS PICA AND WHAT CAN OTS DO?



WHAT IS PICA?

Pica is defined as eating nonnutritive, nonfood substances over a period of at least one month. Pica is often found in young children and they typically include dirt, paper, coffee grounds, eggshells, dust, or small toys (Nasser et al., 2024).

CHECK OUT OUR YOUTUBE VIDEO

<https://youtu.be/JiSF-bllsjQ>

WHY IS PICA HARMFUL?

There is no specific cause of pica; however, it can lead to several adverse health effects. Pica can lead to dental issues, toxicity, malnutrition, constipation/diarrhea, digestive issues, and other medical complications (Williams et al., 2022).

WHAT CAN OTS DO?

Pica may be related to sensory processing problems which occupational therapists can help treat. An occupational therapist would be able to recommend safer yet meaningful ways to fulfill this sensory need, such as 'chewellery' or similar-textured food items to avoid pica or substitute for the pica item (Williams et al., 2022).



if your child likes...

DUST

you should try...

COTTON CANDY

Cotton candy in bite sized pieces mimic a similar texture to dust.

if your child likes...

STYROFOAM

you should try...

RICE CAKES

Rice cakes mimic the crunch and snap texture of styrofoam



if your child likes...

DIRT

you should try...

CRUSHED OREO COOKIES

Crushed Oreos are similar in visual appearance and clumpy texture.

if your child likes...

CLAY, SAND, OR MUD

you should try...

HOMEMADE ALTERNATIVES

There are several recipes online for edible clay, sand, and mud that are safe if ingested



if your child likes...

ROCKS

you should try...

ROCK-SHAPED CANDY

Rock-shaped candy/rock candy mimics the appearance and crunch of actual rocks

