



## Signs of Pica

### Signs of Pica

Here are the **signs of pica** parents and caregivers should look for:

- Frequent mouthing or swallowing of non-food items
- Finding unusual objects in stools
- Eating from floors, trash cans, or unusual surfaces
- Persistent searching for objects to mouth
- Mistaking non-food items for food items
- Reports from babysitters, teachers, etc., about concerning behaviors
- Individuals who are nonspeaking may be at an increased risk for pica due to inability or difficulties in communicating needs and individual autonomy for getting those needs met

Parents should track pica frequency, context, and types of items, as this helps health professionals tailor assessment and intervention.



### *Impact on Families*

Parents of children with pica often experience:

- **Chronic worry** about ingestion risks
- **Emotional burnout** from ongoing supervision demands
- **Stress** related to balancing safety with independence

Expert consensus suggests that involving a team of professionals and consistent planning can reduce risk and parental stress.

