



REMINDER

Psychiatric Disorder: Pica

Description of Issue and Importance

Pica is the ongoing eating or swallowing of non-nutritious substances. Pica can cause illnesses and even be life-threatening. It is important to understand what pica is and be able to identify it. It is also important to be aware of the complications of pica and available treatment options. A team approach for treatment of pica is often helpful (e.g., psychologist, physician, dentist, social worker).

Recommended Action and Prevention Strategy

- Watch for incidents of pica.
- Look out for and remove from the environment any non-nutritious items that the individual is known to eat or swallow.
- If pica occurs, watch for complications related to ingestion of the item such as toxicity, bowel complications, and dental complications.
- Write down and report incidents, symptoms, and frequency of symptoms to your supervisor, other team and family members.

Related Resources

"Pica" Fact Sheet

References

Ellis, C. R. & Pataki, C. Pica: Practice essentials. Retrieved 10/22/2015 from: <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/914765-overview>

Hagopian, L. P., Rooker, G. W. & Rolider, N. U. (2011). Identifying empirically supported treatment for pica in individuals with intellectual disabilities. Research in developmental disabilities, 32 (6), 2114-2020. Retrieved 10/22/2015 from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21862281>

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