

SAMPLE OF BITE-SIZED RESEARCH QUARTERLY

Here at The Feeding Link, we are excited to announce Bite-Sized Research Quarterly. This is a short sample of what to expect from this newsletter, which will typically entail information from 5-10 research articles. We invite you to subscribe to this service [on our website](#).



Bite-Sized Research Quarterly

Quarterly Insight in Topics Related to Pediatric Feeding Disorder
Sample Edition: July 2026

Featured Topic:

Pica and Developmental Disabilities

Article 1:

The Assessment and Management of Pica in People with Intellectual Disability

Authors: Williams, Gibbs, and Addo
2022

Summary: This article describes the clinical presentation of Pica, potentially dangerous considerations of the condition, evaluation options, and intervention strategies.

What is Pica?

Eating non-food items at large quantities past a developmental age where the individual should be able to distinguish between food and non-food items (identified as 2 years old.) This can be problematic as individuals may consume poisonous or lethal items.

Why do individuals eat nonfood objects?

The research is unclear, but there are likely multiple factors that come into play. Some associations are the diagnoses of intellectual disability, nutritional deficiencies, dental issues, or brain injuries. These are not conclusive. The behavior is described as self-satisfying for the individual even when underlying physical or nutritional deficiencies are managed.

Treatment Strategies

Interdisciplinary teams should address both underlying medical issues (dental damage, GI obstructions, infections) and behaviors. Generally, behavior-based strategies include parent education of the complications of Pica, supervision of the child, and limiting access to commonly eaten or dangerous objects. One strategy is to teach children to exchange non-food items for strongly preferred food items. Another strategy is for occupational therapists to focus on general sensory processing treatments.

Key Takeaways:

Pica is a complex disorder that can create serious and fatal health issues. It does not have a simple solution; treatment strategies should be highly individualized based on the child's unique needs. Best practice is to address underlying medical complications while working on behavioral and sensory needs.

[Link to Article](#)

Article 2:

Pica: A Common Condition that is Commonly Missed - An Update Review

Authors: Leung and Lun Hon
2019

Summary: This similar review article describes the epidemiology of Pica, associated complications, and management of the condition.

Is Pica identified world-wide?

Yes! There are cases of Pica identified in a wide range of literature. However, various definitions of Pica are dependent on cultural expectations. Pica may be associated with limited food access.

What else does this article say?

There are many specific types of Pica, like pet food eating, that only occur in children who have pets in the home. This indicates that Pica is a learned behavior. Children with Pica are typically highly selective and preferential in what they put in their mouths. Some types include eating clay, raw starch, dirt, ice, paint chips, raw potatoes, feces, paper, soap, or many others. The risks associated with Pica are dependent on the preferences of the individual child.

What are specific complications to be aware of?

Clinically, children may be at high risk for lead poisoning and parasites. This condition may cause micronutrient abnormalities. Potentially, more recognizable complications could be dental damage and constipation. Fatal complications occur with bowel perforations or infections.

Key Takeaways:

Address issues like food insecurity first. Working through mental health challenges, including childhood depression and anxiety, may be successful. For children with intellectual disability, intensive behavioral therapies and supervision may be necessary.

[Link to Article](#)

Article 3:

Assessment and Treatment of Pica: A Consecutive Controlled Case Series Study

Authors: Frank-Crawford, Hagopian, Scheithauer, McMahon, Argueta, Gall, and Schmidt
2025

Summary: ABA treatment strategies were used to address Pica for 33 children. The outcomes showed a 90% reduction in non-food eating behaviors in children who completed the interventions.

What did the intervention entail?

Kids were seen in an isolated room with only a behavioral therapist, who provided the non-food item that was most preferred by the child. The cases used different methods. Therapists provided verbal or physical attention to the child when they ignored the item, or they blocked the child's hand when they brought the item to their mouth and directed them to throw it out in a trash can. Each intervention reviewed was different based on individual child factors.

What seemed to work?

Most strategies were successful, except for reinforcement alone or reinforcement + punishment. The strategies that worked well included some combination of blocking the eating of the item, directing the child to discard the item, and reinforcing with a different preferred item. Treatments that provided the child with a safe food item were better than treatments that provided the child with nonfood items.

Key Takeaways:

Behavioral strategies must be highly tailored to the individual. Children responded the best when the therapists provided other preferred food items, physically blocked the child from eating the non-food item, and taught the child to discard the non-food item in combination. Importantly, this study doesn't have robust data about the generalizability or long term effects of the treatment outside of the therapeutic setting.

[Link to Article](#)

A Note from Dr. Glasgo

At The Feeding Link, we are committed to providing meaningful and accessible research synopses to the working practitioner. This newsletter provides information that is meant to be applicable to you, and that means that we welcome feedback for future editions.

I use a variety of tools, including direct searching of academic libraries, large language models, and following reference trails to identify articles that are relevant to the mission of The Feeding Link.

Once identified, I distill the articles into short, easy-to-read bites. This newsletter is not a comprehensive literature review and will not focus on critique or consideration of methodology. Rather, this newsletter provides nuggets of information that can empower your practice.

Enjoy

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