

Anemia in Pregnancy due to Pica – Case Report and Management

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Objectives:

- To understand the presenting features of Pica
- To understand management of anemia due to Pica in pregnancy.
- To understand other management principles in Pica in pregnancy

Case Report:

- A 25-year-old G3P2011 female seen for initial prenatal visit at 12 weeks gestation
- Presented nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath and dizziness, no vaginal bleeding or loss of consciousness and history of Pica in previous pregnancy and family history of Pica – her mother
- Had reduced oral intake and preferred eating ice chips
- Hemoglobin 7.9 with low ferritin and elevated TIBC
- She did not tolerate oral iron supplementation, so parenteral iron was administered

	Form of Pica	Substance
1	Acuphagia	Sharp objects
2	Amylophagia	Raw starch or uncooked rice or pasta, baking soda
3	Cautopyreiophagia	Matches
4	Coniophagia	Dust from Venetian blinds
5	Geomelophagia	Potatoes
6	Geophagia	Clay, cement, chalk, flour, sand
7	Gooberphagiar	Peanuts
8	Lectophagia	Lettuce
9	Lithophagia	Stones, pebbles, rocks
10	Pagophagia	Ice, Excessive or compulsive eating of ice cream
11	Salinophagia	Salt
12	Sapophagia	Soap
13	Stachtophagia	Ashes from cigarettes
14	Trichophagia	Hair
15	Xylophagia	Wood toothpicks, cardboard, paper, toilet tissues, paperback books, facial tissues
16	Unnamed forms	Air freshener Carrots Cereals Chewing gum Coal Coffee beans Croutons Disinfectant Magnesium carbonate Naphthalene Paint Plaster
14		

Treatment of Pica in Pregnancy

Effective treatment of iron deficiency anemia requires administration of iron - oral or parenteral routes depending on patient and provider preferences.

We chose the parenteral route because of ease and certainty of administration and the patient had declined blood transfusion and had difficulties with oral iron.

Discussion

Pica is a type of eating disorder where patient eats non-nutritious substances such as ice, clay, starch, chalk, eggshells, etc.

Pica is more common in pregnant patients than the general population.
Pica during pregnancy may lead to iron deficiency anemia and can have long term effect

Discussion

Pica during pregnancy may lead to long term health effects on both the fetus as well as the mother, especially if the consumed substances contain toxic materials such as lead

Pica in pregnancy may lead to seizures, small for gestational age (SGA) babies and long-term developmental disability.

Conclusion -Pica in Pregnancy

She received parenteral iron with significant improvement in her hemoglobin to 10.4 mg/dL at the time of delivery – up from 7.9

This is an opportunity to re-visit newer parenteral iron options different from older versions that had issues such as anaphylaxis

Management of Pica in Pregnancy

- Evaluation for psychiatric problems such as eating disorders, schizophrenia, and autism.
- Reduce access to the non-nutritious substances
- Provide healthy, nutritious alternative
- Replace Iron, zinc, and any other identified deficient nutrients.

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