

Pica and food cravings Pica, the practice of consuming nonfood substances (e.g., clay, dirt, and laundry starch) or excessive amounts of foodstuffs low in nutritional value (e.g., cornstarch, ice, baking powder, and baking soda), is often influenced by the woman's cultural background (Fig. Regular and heavy consumption of low-nutrient products may cause more nutritious foods to be displaced from the diet, and the items consumed may interfere with the absorption of nutrients, especially minerals. Women with pica have lower hemoglobin levels than those without pica. 10–3).