



Interoception

Understanding Your Eighth Sense

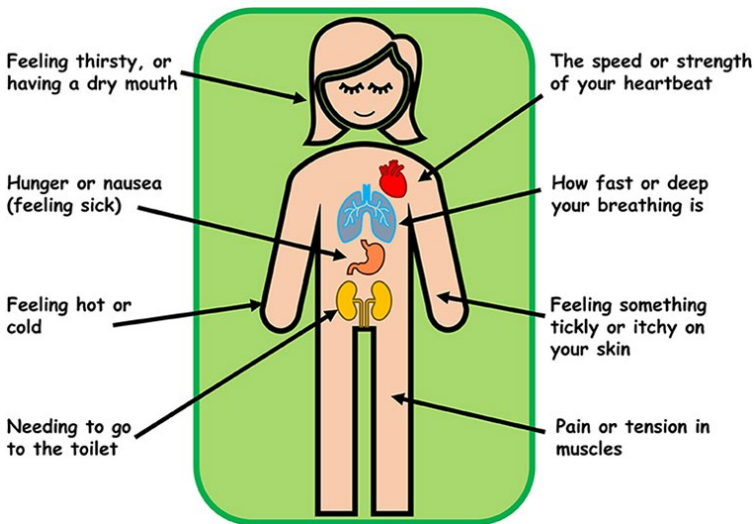
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What is Interoception?

Interoception is one of your bodies senses that helps you understand and feel what's going on inside your body. Receptors send information about the inside of your body to your brain. This helps regulate our vital functions like body temperature, hunger, thirst, digestion, and heart rate.

Here are some examples of Interoception in action:

- the urge to go to the toilet
- feeling too hot
- feeling too cold
- thirst
- hunger
- satiation
- nausea
- feeling your heartbeat



sign of possible

INTEROCEPTION SENSITIVITY

@movementmatters



bedwetting or accidents



difficulty with toilet training



struggles with awareness of hunger or thirst



difficulty regulating voice volume



struggles with recognizing body temperature



distracted by internal body functions

Sensory Processing and Interoception

For kids with sensory processing issues, the brain may have trouble making sense of that information. They may not be able to tell when they're feeling pain or when their bladder is full. An itch may feel like pain or pain may feel ticklish.

Kids who struggle with the interoceptive sense can also have trouble “feeling” their emotions. They may not be as tuned into the body cues that help interpret emotion. Without being able to feel and interpret those body sensations, it's harder to clearly identify the emotion.

Self-Regulation and Interoception

Having trouble with this sense can also make self-regulation a challenge. When you are able to tell that you are thirsty, you know to take a drink. When you can feel that your bladder is full, you know to use the bathroom. When you feel a sense of frustration, you know to explain what's troubling you.

For some children, this system doesn't work well and they cannot regulate certain responses. Some children may experience bedwetting or they may not know why they are feeling off and can have meltdowns. Children who struggle with these things may not be able to identify the real source of their discomfort.

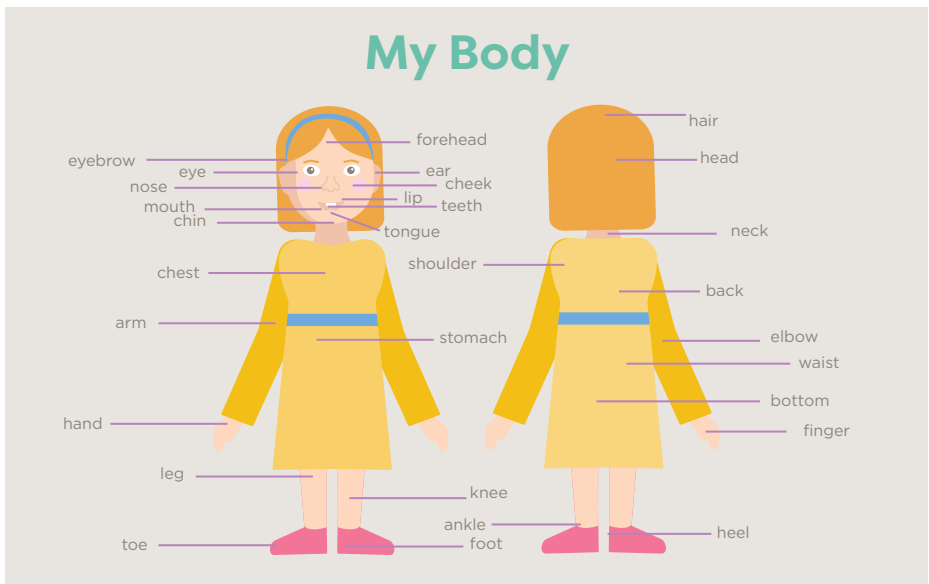


Activities to Develop Interoception

It is important that you work with an occupational therapist or other medical professional who can support your child with their specific needs and challenges. Here is general advice but is by no means medical treatment that you should implement without further

evaluation.

- A child can learn to pay attention to their body's signals, recognise patterns in those signals, and then identify each with a particular emotion
- Point to different body parts on a body poster and have them wiggle that body part on their actual body
- Play a game of *Simon Says*. Use actions like clench your fists, breath really hard, touch your heart, etc
- Point to a body part and ask them how it feels right now. For example, eyes: they could be itchy, sleepy, awake, dry, watery, etc



- **Social stories**

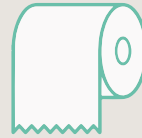
Social stories are a great way to talk about concepts that may be hard for a child to grasp, understand, or remember. This would be particularly helpful for toilet training, temperature regulation, and feeling hungry or thirsty

- **Visual prompts**

Providing visual prompts and cues can be very helpful. This includes prompts for using the bathroom, how often to get drinks, when it is time to eat, needing a coat or jacket for outside, etc



Sit on toilet



Wipe until clean



Flush toilet



Wash hands

