

## The Interoception Sense

Interoception is a sense that provides information about the internal condition of our body—how our body is feeling on the inside.

Interoception allows us to experience many body sensations such as a growling stomach, dry mouth, tense muscles or racing heart.

### What does Interoception do?

The receptors inside your organs, including your skin 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.

Interoception helps you understand and feel what's going on inside your body. For instance, you know if your heart is beating fast or if you need to breathe more deeply. You're able to tell if you need to use the bathroom. You know if you're hungry, full, hot, cold, thirsty, nauseated, itchy or ticklish.

### What happens when it isn't working typically?

For people 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. They may never feel hungry or thirsty. An itch may feel like pain or pain may feel ticklish.

People who struggle with the interoceptive sense can also have trouble "feeling" their emotions. They may not be as tuned in to 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.

For instance, a child may not "feel" fear because they don't recognise that their muscles are tense, breathing is shallow, and heart is racing.