Fifteen, fearful about food, and reaching out

Dear Alice,

I am a fifteen-year-old female. I am in desperate need of some advice as to what I should be eating every day. I am too scared to eat too much or the wrong things so I end up practically starving myself. Do you have any tips on the minimum I should be eating for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and if so, what that could include? I have found it really difficult to find recommended eating plans that are not just food guide pyramids? I need something more specific. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Melissa

Answer

Dear Melissa,

Asking about your health and gathering information is a brave first step towards making an informed decision about your health. There is a great deal of information about eating healthy out there and it can easily become overwhelming. It seems as if your desire to eat more healthfully has become dangerously restrictive. If you find a registered dietician through your school or through your family health care provider or pediatrician, you can make an appointment with her/him to discuss not only your eagerness to eat well, but also your tendency to "practically starve" yourself. If you explain that this is due to your fear of eating too much or of eating the wrong things, it will help the health care practitioner or registered dietician know more about how to work with you, to help you get the support you need to make the choices essential to your health.

The registered dietician can talk with you about your particular eating preferences, patterns, and concerns. S/he can also help you develop a healthy eating plan to get you back on track. A part of the healing is for you to see health care providers who can evaluate your current health status, and who can better manage and follow your progress.

Other people have been in this position, having issues with eating and wanting to learn to make healthier choices. Many have found ways to manage their fears, concerns, and eating patterns to live a healthier life. This step-by-step process and writing to Go Ask Alice! are huge steps toward better health.

If you would like more information on where to seek help, you can visit the National Eating Disorders Association website. Carolyn Costin's book, The Eating Disorder Sourcebook: A Comprehensive Guide to the Causes, Treatments, and Prevention of Eating Disorders, also
has information that could address your concerns.

Thinking of you,

Alice!

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