U10-U11: fuel for football

Daily eating

- Eatwell plate: about a third starchy carbs, a third fruit and veg
- Calcium and vitamin D for growing bones (dairy or fortified alternatives)
- Iron-rich foods: red meat, beans, fortified cereals
- Healthy snacks between school and training

Matchday plan

- Night before: normal balanced tea
- Breakfast 3 hrs before: cereal, toast
- Half-time: water, fruit
- After: carb + protein meal

Before	Meal 2-3 hrs before (e.g. after school tea); snack 1 hr before.
During	Water at each drinks break; carry a bottle.
After	Carb + protein snack: milk and banana, sandwich, yoghurt.
Hydration	6-8 drinks a day, more when hot; start sessions hydrated.

Meal and snack ideas

- Jacket potato with beans
- Bagel with cheese
- Pasta bake with veg
- Fruit and milk after training

Note Food first: under-18s do not need sports supplements, protein shakes or energy drinks. Speak to a GP or registered dietitian with any concerns.

Disclaimer

General guidance only, not medical or dietetic advice. Needs vary with age, growth, health, allergies and culture. For individual advice see a GP, registered dietitian or SENr-registered sports nutritionist. Under-18s: food first, no sports supplements or energy drinks; see a professional with any concerns.

Sources

NHS: The Eatwell Guide: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/
NHS: Vitamin D: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/
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England Football Learning: How to help young people eat well:
https://learn.englandfootball.com/articles-and-resources/welfare/resources/2024/How-to-help-young-people-eat-well
UEFA expert group statement on nutrition in elite football (BJSM, 2021): https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/55/8/416

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U10-U11: match-day plan and recipes

Guidance only, not medical advice. See a GP or registered dietitian for allergies, intolerances or medical conditions. Nutrition figures are rough estimates, not lab-tested. Always check food labels for allergens. Under-18s: food first. No sports supplements, caffeine or energy drinks.

Match-day plan

Breakfast: Overnight oats with berries (if kick-off is late morning, this is your pre-match meal)
3-4 hrs before: Chicken, tomato and spinach pasta
1-2 hrs before: Banana toast. Small and familiar, nothing new on match day.
Half-time: Water and orange slices or a few bites of banana.
Within 1 hr after: Banana and oat recovery smoothie
Evening meal: Cheese and salad wholemeal sandwich with fruit

Hydration: 6-8 drinks a day, more when hot; start sessions hydrated. Drink a glass of water with each meal on match day. Water or milk only: no energy drinks or caffeine drinks for under-18s.

NHS daily limits: No more than 5g salt (age 7-10) or 6g (11+); free sugars no more than 24g (7-10) or 30g (11+).

Overnight oats with berries

Breakfast | 5 min

Ingredients (1 standard portion): 50g porridge oats; 150g plain yoghurt; 100ml semi-skimmed milk; 80g berries (fresh or frozen); 1 tsp chia seeds (optional)

1. Mix oats, yoghurt and milk in a jar or tub.
2. Add berries on top, cover and chill overnight.
3. Eat cold, or warm for 1 minute in the microwave.

U10-U11 portion: about 3/4 of the recipe. Approx. (estimate) 300 kcal, 44g carbs, 14g protein, 8g fat, 0.2g salt.

Allergens: Cereals containing gluten (oats); Milk. Swaps: Dairy-free: soya yoghurt and drink. Swap berries for grated apple.

Cheesy beans on wholemeal toast

Breakfast or recovery | 8 min

Ingredients (1 standard portion): 200g reduced-sugar, reduced-salt baked beans; 2 slices wholemeal bread; 20g grated cheddar

1. Heat the beans in a pan or microwave until piping hot.
2. Toast the bread.
3. Pour beans over toast and sprinkle with cheese.

U10-U11 portion: about 3/4 of the recipe. Approx. (estimate) 320 kcal, 45g carbs, 16g protein, 7g fat, 1.4g salt.

Allergens: Cereals containing gluten; Milk; Check bean label (some contain celery or mustard). Swaps: Dairy-free: leave out the cheese. Vegan with dairy-free spread.

Chicken, tomato and spinach pasta

Pre-match meal (3-4 hrs before) | 20 min

Ingredients (1 standard portion): 90g dried wholewheat pasta; 100g chicken breast, diced; 150g tomato passata; 1/2 red pepper, chopped; 1 handful spinach; 1 garlic clove, crushed; 1 tsp olive oil

1. Cook the pasta in boiling water for 10-12 minutes.
2. Fry chicken in the oil for 6-8 minutes until cooked through.
3. Add pepper and garlic for 2 minutes, then passata. Simmer 5 minutes.
4. Stir in spinach until wilted. Mix with the drained pasta.

U10-U11 portion: about 3/4 of the recipe. Approx. (estimate) 460 kcal, 64g carbs, 32g protein, 8g fat, 0.2g salt.

Allergens: Cereals containing gluten. Swaps: Veggie: 120g chickpeas instead of chicken. Gluten-free pasta works. Use white pasta if wholewheat sits heavy before a match.

Tuna and sweetcorn jacket potato

Pre-match meal (3-4 hrs before) | 10 min

Ingredients (1 standard portion): 1 medium potato (about 250g); 80g tinned tuna in spring water, drained; 2 tbsp sweetcorn; 1 tbsp light mayonnaise; Side salad (lettuce, cucumber)

1. Prick the potato. Microwave 7-9 minutes until soft (or bake 1 hour at 200C).
2. Mix tuna, sweetcorn and mayonnaise.
3. Split the potato, fill and serve with salad.

U10-U11 portion: about 3/4 of the recipe. Approx. (estimate) 320 kcal, 44g carbs, 20g protein, 7g fat, 0.5g salt.

Allergens: Fish; Eggs (mayonnaise); Mustard (check mayonnaise). Swaps: Veggie: reduced-salt baked beans or cottage cheese. Egg-free: plain yoghurt instead of mayonnaise.

U10-U11: recipes (continued)

Banana toast

Snack (1-2 hrs before) | 3 min

Ingredients (1 standard portion): 1 slice wholemeal or white toast; 1 small banana, mashed or sliced; 1 tsp honey (optional)

1. Toast the bread.
2. Top with banana and a drizzle of honey.

U10-U11 portion: about 3/4 of the recipe. Approx. (estimate) 170 kcal, 34g carbs, 4g protein, 2g fat, 0.3g salt.

Allergens: Cereals containing gluten. Swaps: Gluten-free bread. Swap honey for cinnamon to cut sugar. No honey for babies under 1.

Hummus, pitta and veg sticks

Snack (1-2 hrs before) | 5 min

Ingredients (1 standard portion): 2 tbsp reduced-fat hummus; 1/2 wholemeal pitta, cut into strips; 1 carrot and 1/4 cucumber, in sticks

1. Warm the pitta if you like.
2. Serve with hummus and the veg sticks.

U10-U11 portion: about 3/4 of the recipe. Approx. (estimate) 160 kcal, 21g carbs, 6g protein, 5g fat, 0.4g salt.

Allergens: Sesame (tahini); Cereals containing gluten. Swaps: Sesame allergy: tzatziki or bean dip instead. Gluten-free: rice cakes.

Banana and oat recovery smoothie

Recovery (within 1 hr after) | 4 min

Ingredients (1 standard portion): 250ml semi-skimmed milk; 1 banana; 20g porridge oats; 80g frozen berries

1. Put everything in a blender.
2. Blend until smooth. Drink soon after training.

U10-U11 portion: about 3/4 of the recipe. Approx. (estimate) 280 kcal, 48g carbs, 10g protein, 5g fat, 0.2g salt.

Allergens: Milk; Cereals containing gluten (oats). Swaps: Dairy-free: fortified soya drink (similar protein). Add 1 tbsp peanut butter for older players if no allergy.

Cheese and salad wholemeal sandwich with fruit

Recovery (within 1 hr after) | 5 min

Ingredients (1 standard portion): 2 slices wholemeal bread; 25g reduced-fat cheddar, grated; Cucumber and tomato slices; 1 apple

1. Fill the bread with cheese and salad.
2. Cut into quarters and serve with the apple.

U10-U11 portion: about 3/4 of the recipe. Approx. (estimate) 300 kcal, 39g carbs, 14g protein, 8g fat, 1.0g salt.

Allergens: Cereals containing gluten; Milk. Swaps: Swap cheese for egg, tuna or chicken. Dairy-free spread.

Recipe sources

NHS: The Eatwell Guide: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide/
NHS: Salt in your diet (daily limits by age): https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-types/salt-nutrition/
NHS: Sugar, the facts (free sugar limits by age): https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-types/how-does-sugar-in-our-diet-affect-our-health/
NHS: Water, drinks and hydration: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/water-drinks-nutrition/
NHS Healthier Families: Healthier snacks: https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/food-facts/healthier-snacks/
NHS: Food allergy: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-allergy/
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England Football Learning: How to help young people eat well:
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