Sample match day diet for a Rugby Union player

Suggested menu for a kick-off before 12pm

MEAL	FOOD
Breakfast	Choose two options: • High fibre cereal with chopped banana, honey and milk • Scrambled eggs on whole grain toast with yogurt • High carbohydrate smoothie (see smoothie factsheet) • Porridge made on milk with honey and fruit • Ham omelette with toast • Pancakes, honey, banana and yogurt • Large pot low fat yogurt, glass fruit juice and handful dried fruit
1 hour before match	Easily digested foods and fluids e.g. orange juice, cereal bars, sports drinks, white bread, banana, jam, honey, pancakes (see snack list fact sheet)
During match	Isotonic sports drinks or diluted fruit squash or water. Half time - jelly babies, jaffa cakes, cereal bar, fluids
Recovery post match (within 1/2 hour of coming off field)	Choose at least one option: • 500mls flavoured milk drink (e.g. Yazoo, Avonmore) and cereal bar • White bread sandwich with ham or jam or peanut butter • 200mls of drinking yogurt and banana • 2 tubs of yogurt and handful of sultanas or raisins • Drink plenty of fluids during recovery

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Suggested menu for a kick-off before 2pm

MEAL	FOOD
Breakfast	Choose one option: • High fibre cereal with chopped banana, honey and milk, glass of fruit juice • Scrambled eggs with 3-4 sliced whole grain toast, yogurt and dried fruit • High carbohydrate smoothie (see smoothie factsheet), pancakes with honey • Porridge made on milk with honey and fruit, high carbohydrate smoothie • Ham omelette with 3-4 slices wholegrain toast, large glass fruit juice • 3-4 slices toast, nutella, banana and glass of milk
Lunch (about 3 hours before kick-off)	• Large serve of high fibre carbohydrates i.e. brown pasta, basmati rice, potatoes, brown bread - whichever you find comfortable pre match • Team this up with meat and a low fat sauce e.g. spaghetti bolognaise, tuna and light mayonnaise, bacon and pasta sauce, chicken with low fat cheese • If you cannot eat foods before a match, take a high energy smoothie instead, but you need to practice eating
During match	Isotonic sports drinks or diluted fruit squash or water. Half time - jelly babies, jaffa cakes, cereal bar, fluids
Recovery post match (within 1/2 hour of coming off field)	Choose at least one option: • Pint skimmed milk • Pretzels/snack-a-jacks/home-made pasta pot and cereal bar • 200mls of drinking yogurt and banana • Bread sandwich with meat filling and fruit juice • Drink plenty of fluids during recovery

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Source: http://www.irishrugby.ie/downloads/Nutrition_Eating.pdf

These fact sheets were designed by Ireland Rugby Football Union to provide players with suggestions about good food choices for match day.

The top fact sheet is a suggested diet for a match kick-off before 12pm.

The bottom fact sheet is a suggested diet for a match kick-off after 2pm.

Student activities

1. Are you familiar with all the foods and drinks listed in both fact sheets?
2. Why might food and drink choices be different in Ireland?
3. For the menu for kick-off before 12pm choose the options you would make for each stage of the day? Share your answers with the class.
4. For the menu for kick-off before 2pm choose the options you would make for each stage of the day? Share your answers with the class.
5. Why would it would be important not too each too much in the hour leading up to a match?

   FACT: Digestion of eaten foods requires energy – energy which could be better used to play your sport well; and eating too soon before any kind of activity can leave you with food in the stomach, making you feel cramped, bloated, full and sick.

Extension activity

Develop a healthy menu for players participating in any upcoming Rugby events. Your menu should reflect the needs of rugby players, and also include a variety of foods and nutrients.