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## Rugby Nutrition:

### Taking Charge of Food

You may be faced with many different situations that challenge your dietary regime:

- Staying in a hostel where food quality and quantity are inappropriate
- Insufficient time to prepare meals
- Relying on take-out food and restaurants

There are 3 fundamental principles that can help you take charge:

1. Master **menu planning**
2. **Shop Smart** and **stock up** on supplies
3. **Eat out** as if you're eating in



## 1. Master Menu Planning

- Plan meals for the week ahead, including meals to be eaten out, also taking into consideration training and match commitments. By creating a spreadsheet to include breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks you can incorporate a variety of different meal options and combinations. Include different protein choices (e.g. lean meat, skinless chicken, fish, eggs and legumes) and vary the carbohydrate options (e.g. rice, potato, pasta), vegetables and fruit.
- When planning lunches and suppers, select one of the main meal protein choices (i.e. either meat or chicken or fish) and then plan the rest of the meal around this, choosing different combinations at different meals. For example, if fish is served on Monday night, plan to include meat, chicken or a vegetarian option on Tuesday.
- If you are time-stressed, think about ready-made or quick-to-prepare options from suitable delicatessens and supermarkets. Look beyond pastas to raviolis, gnocchi (buy or make fresh tomato sauce and then add in extra protein with the salad/soup), risotto, paella, stir-fries or baked potatoes with a Bolognese/lentil/baked bean or tuna sauce. Always add in plenty vegetables (carbohydrate-based options include peas, carrots, onions, corn, beetroot, butternut/pumpkin) and fresh fruit.

## 2. Shop Smart and Stock up

Even if you are not responsible for shopping or cooking, share these tips with whoever is involved with the preparation of meals:

- Draw up your shopping list from your menu plan.
- Choose products that meet your energy and nutrient needs.
- Read labels to make better choices.

- Look at the order of the list of ingredients. They are listed in descending order or weight, which means that if fat or salt appears high up on the list (within the first 3 ingredients) the product is high in fat or salt and is not a healthy choice.
- For more detailed information, and to compare different products check the typical nutrition information panel which will give you the energy and nutrient breakdown.
- When comparing products, make sure that similar serving sizes are being compared and relate this to the quantity that would be eaten.

### **Stock up**

Keep a stock of certain basic food items at home and top up with fresh produce (dairy products, bread, fruit and vegetables, and, if necessary, meats) 1-2 times per week to save time and energy. There are many convenient long-life products on the shelves, some of which may be useful if you are in a boarding house or residence, or to have on hand on return from travel.

### **FREEZE**

Skinless chicken, lean beef, ostrich, lamb or pork, frozen fish pieces (e.g. hake), grated low fat cheese (Mozzarella)

Bread, rolls, wraps, tortillas, pita breads, pizza bases, oven-baked chips muffins, crumpets, pancakes

Frozen vegetables and stir fry, frozen fruit (berries etc.), fruit lollies and low fat frozen yoghurt

## CHILL

Yoghurt, milk, flavoured milk, buttermilk, maas, cheese, including reduced-fat cheese (11 – 22%) and cottage cheese

Eggs, lean cold meat, chicken, turkey, tofu, hummus

Fresh fruit, vegetables, juices, convenient pre-cut vegetables, fresh herbs, ginger, chilli

Butter, soft margarine, low-oil mayonnaise, nut butter, pesto, tapenade

## STORE

Oats, mealie meal, other porridges and breakfast cereals (including wholegrain options)

Pasta, quick-cooking noodles, rice (varieties), samp, couscous, quinoa, barley, bulgur wheat, polenta

Tinned fish (tuna, pilchards, sardines) and sachets, canned and dried legumes (kidney beans, baked beans, lentils, chickpeas), soya mince, biltong

Cream-style sweetcorn, tomato and tomato/onion mixes, bottled pasta sauce e.g. tomato, pesto, tapenade

Brumpet, crumpet and pancake mixes, long-life custard or custard powder, jelly, canned fruit in real juice

Long-life milk, skim milk powder, cocoa, Nesquik, hot chocolate, coffee, tea

Sugar, flour, soy sauce, vinegar, oil (include olive oil), dried herbs, spices, curry pastes

Jams, honey, syrup, peanut butter, Marmite and fish paste, chocolate spread

Cordials, Sports drinks

Snacks:

Cereal, sports and muesli bars

Dried fruit, trail mixes, nuts and seeds

Provita/Ryvita and other grain crackers, pretzels, popcorn

Plain sweet biscuits (e.g. Marie, Boudoir, ginger, rusks)

### 3. Eat Out as if You Are Eating In

Eating out may provide a much-needed break. However, if it's a regular habit, you need to be extra vigilant to make careful choices with clever combinations. Stick to recommended portion sizes, so your dietary goals can still be met. If you are uncertain as to how a dish is prepared, ask for more information and be assertive.

Additional tips:

- Always ensure that the protein you order is lean. Lean beef, skinless chicken, ostrich, fish and seafood are good choices.
- If you want to limit your fat intake, choose low fat methods of preparation (e.g. steamed, stir-fried, grilled/seared with minimal oil; baked or roasted without cream or butter). Avoid menu items with the words – battered, fried, deep-fried, sautéed, creamy, creamed and crumbed, pastries and pies. Order sauces, dressings and gravy on the side.
- If you need more carbohydrate, order extra rolls, rice, baked potato, sweet potato and corn avoiding added fats (oil, butter) and fried options.
- Order extra vegetables and salads for additional nutrients. Simply steamed, stir-fried or raw.
- If cutting back on kilojoules, enjoy a fruit-based dessert, specialty coffee (no cream) or tea. You can also share a dessert.
- It goes without saying that alcohol and sugar-sweetened beverages and fruit juice may contribute additional kilojoules which may not be warranted.

For more information on *Rugby Nutrition*, go to the BokSmart website [www.BokSmart.com](http://www.BokSmart.com) or go to the following link: <http://boksmart.sarugby.co.za/content/eating-and-drinking-right>

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