



## **Food for Footballers**

**"He had in his mind, 'I need to make myself special and I'm going to have to learn everything I need to become special. My training and my diet. I'm going to have to regiment my day and my week, months and years and become as good as I can be by every possible means.' He had a plan."**

**(Mick Clegg on Cristiano Ronaldo)**



## **Why is sport nutrition or diet important in football?**

- Food provides us with energy for our muscles, brain and other organs.
- Football requires plenty of exercise, and therefore it is important to have energy available to us during the game.
- The energy available to us at any particular time depends on our blood sugar levels.
- If we over-eat or eat the wrong things, we become over-weight. The heavier we are, the more work our muscles have to do to take us the same distance. This reduces our stamina, and our ability to accelerate quickly. If we under-eat, we can become weak and our overall health can decline, because we are not getting enough nutrients.

**A healthy diet improves our general level of health, and can help us recover more quickly from injuries. Your diet is essential for our growth, and development.**

## **Here are five other key nutrition tips for every young footballer:**

- **Don't skip breakfast.** A good breakfast sets you up for the day with some vital vitamins and minerals – whole grain cereal with fruit is a good example.
- **Have five a day.** Aim to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. This isn't as hard as it sounds – fresh, frozen, tinned, dried and juiced fruit and vegetables all count, so smoothies, for example, are fine.
- **Drink enough fluids.** Especially important before, during and after training, you should aim to drink six to eight glasses of water, milk or unsweetened fruit juice a day.
- **Snack healthily.** If you're feeling peckish in between meals, don't always reach for the biscuit jar or cake tin. Both have lots of saturated fat and sugar and are high in calories, so if you eat these foods often you're more likely to become overweight.

