



FUELING THE U10 PLAYER (8–10)

A PARENT'S GUIDE — HABITS FIRST, FUN ALWAYS

U10 FUELING GUIDE

At 8–10, nutrition has one job: **build the habits that the next ten years will run on.** Breakfast every day, water everywhere, fruit and milk as defaults, and zero pressure at the table. Portions are kid-sized — their own palm and fist are the measure — and picky eating is normal, not a crisis. Keep it fun; keep it routine.

1 • FUEL, DON'T DIET

No weight talk, no restriction, no calorie counting — at any age in this club. Appetite that rises with training and growth is the system working.

2 • CARBS ARE THE GAS

Soccer runs on carbohydrates — rice, pasta, bread, potatoes, oats, fruit. More on training and game days, a little less on rest days.

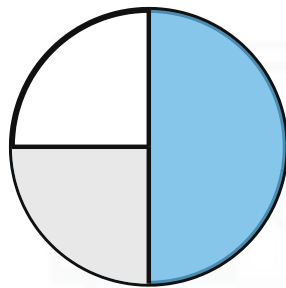
3 • PROTEIN BUILDS, EVERY MEAL

A palm-size portion at breakfast, lunch, and dinner — eggs, milk, yogurt, chicken, beef, fish, beans, peanut butter.

4 • TIMING BEATS PERFECTION

The 3 hours before and 45 minutes after activity matter most. Nail the timing and the rest is normal family food.

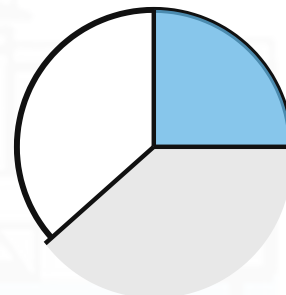
THE PERFORMANCE PLATE — HOW TO BUILD EVERY MEAL



TRAINING & GAME DAYS

- 1/2 CARBS — rice, pasta, bread, potatoes
- 1/4 PROTEIN — chicken, beef, eggs, beans
- 1/4 COLOR — veggies & fruit

+ milk or yogurt · + water · portions scale with the player



REST DAYS

- 1/3 CARBS
- 1/3 PROTEIN
- 1/3 COLOR — go bigger on veggies

Same foods, shifted portions. Nothing is “banned.”

THE HOUSE RULES (POST THESE ON THE FRIDGE)

- ✓ Breakfast every single day — non-negotiable for growing athletes
- ✓ Chocolate milk (or yogurt + fruit) within 45 min of every practice & game
- ✗ No energy drinks, no soda at soccer — and no caffeine at all at this age
- ✗ Nothing fried or brand-new to the stomach on game day
- ✓ A full water bottle at every meal, at school, and at practice
- ✓ Three dairy/calcium servings a day — bones are banking now
- ✗ No soda on training or game days — it's an occasional treat, not a drink
- ✓ Dessert is dessert — never a reward or a punishment



THE SCHOOL-DAY FUELING CLOCK

PRACTICE NIGHTS (TYPICALLY TUE / THU) · SESSIONS 60–75 MIN

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6:45–7:15 AM	BREAKFAST — the day's foundation. Carb + protein + fruit, every day. Rotate: oatmeal with berries & milk · eggs + toast + OJ · Greek yogurt parfait · cereal + milk + banana · bagel with peanut butter. “Not hungry” players start with a smoothie (milk + banana + frozen berries + spoon of PB).
11:30–12:30	SCHOOL LUNCH. Packed: sandwich or wrap + fruit + pretzels or crackers + milk or water. Buying: pick the grilled option over the fried one, always take the fruit, always take the milk. Lunch is fuel for practice — skipping or trading it shows up tonight.
3:30–4:30 PM	PRE-PRACTICE SNACK — the most important snack of the day. Carb-forward, easy on the stomach: banana + peanut butter crackers · yogurt + granola · half a PB&J · applesauce + cheese stick · trail mix + apple. Plus a full bottle of water between now and practice.
30–60 MIN BEFORE	TOP-OFF (only if the snack was early or missed): a banana, an applesauce pouch, or a granola bar. Nothing heavy inside the last hour.
5:30–6:30 PM	PRACTICE. Sessions this short need water only . Sports drinks are for extreme-heat tournament days at most — and never instead of water. The bottle arrives full and comes home empty.
WITHIN 45 MIN AFTER	RECOVERY SNACK — the golden window. Carb + protein starts repair before dinner: chocolate milk is the club's official recovery drink — or a yogurt tube + banana, or half a PB&J in the car.
6:45–7:30 PM	DINNER — the training plate. Half the plate carbs on practice nights; big portions on hard nights are correct, not a problem. Family dinner at the normal time — at this age practice fits around dinner, not the other way round.
8:30–9:00 PM	SLEEP — 9–12 hours at this age. The best recovery tool that exists at any level of the game. Genuinely hungry before bed: milk, yogurt, or a banana.

NON-PRACTICE DAYS

Same clock, minus the top-off and recovery snack. After-school snack becomes fruit + a protein. Dinner uses the rest-day plate.

PICKY EATING — THE LONG GAME

Serve one meal for the family with at least one thing they reliably eat on the plate. No short-order cooking, no clean-plate rule, no bribes. New foods take 10–15 relaxed exposures — keep offering, keep it boring, and let the team cooler do some work (kids eat what teammates eat).



GAME DAY

50-MINUTE MATCHES — NOTHING NEW, NOTHING FRIED, NOTHING RUSHED

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MORNING KICKOFF (e.g., 9:00 AM)

2–2.5h before • Breakfast: pancakes or oatmeal + scrambled eggs + banana + milk/OJ. Familiar and carb-forward.

60–75 min before • Top-off: banana or granola bar + water in the car.

Warm-up onward: water only.

AFTERNOON KICKOFF (e.g., 2:00 PM)

Normal breakfast at the usual time.

2–2.5h before • Pre-match meal: pasta with red sauce, or a turkey sandwich + pretzels + fruit + water. Light on the sauce and cheese.

60–75 min before • Top-off: banana / applesauce pouch.

HALFTIME

At this age halftime oranges ARE the nutrition plan — plus water.

POST-MATCH — THE SAME GOLDEN WINDOW

Within 45 minutes: chocolate milk + a banana or PB crackers (keep a small cooler in the car — it removes every excuse).

Within 2 hours: a real meal on the training plate — burrito bowl, chicken + rice, spaghetti, deli sub + milk. Drive-through reality: grilled option + milk + fruit side is a perfectly good recovery meal.

TOURNAMENT DAYS — EAT BY THE GAP

Under 1 hour between games: fruit, applesauce, pretzels, sports-drink sips. Grazing, not eating.

1–2 hours: half a turkey or PB&J sandwich + fruit + water.

2+ hours: a normal light meal, finished 90 min before the next kickoff.

Pack the cooler the night before: sandwiches, bananas, applesauce, pretzels, cheese sticks, chocolate milk, frozen water bottles (they're the ice packs).

GAME-DAY DON'TS

❌ Nothing fried or greasy before kickoff (biscuits, sausage, fries, fast-food breakfast)

❌ No soda, no energy drinks — and concession-stand candy waits until after the last game

❌ No new foods, new bars, or new drinks on a game day — test everything on a practice day first

❌ Don't skip the post-match snack because lunch is "soon" — the window matters most on multi-game days



THE WEEKLY PLAN

ONE WEEK, ON REPEAT — SWAP FREELY WITHIN ANY COLUMN

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	BREAKFAST	LUNCH (PACK OR PICK)	AFTER-SCHOOL / PRE-PRACTICE	DINNER
MONDAY LIGHTER DAY	Oatmeal + berries + milk	Turkey & cheese sandwich, apple, pretzels, water	Apple + cheese stick	Chicken, rice & broccoli + milk
TUESDAY PRACTICE	Scrambled eggs + toast + OJ	School lunch: grilled pick + fruit + milk	Banana + PB crackers · recovery: chocolate milk	Spaghetti & meat sauce + salad + garlic bread
WEDNESDAY PRACTICE	Greek yogurt + granola + banana	Ham & cheese wrap, carrots + ranch, fruit cup	Yogurt + granola · recovery: chocolate milk	Turkey tacos + beans + rice + toppings
THURSDAY PRACTICE	Whole-grain cereal + milk + banana	Leftover taco quesadilla + apple + water	Half PB&J + banana · recovery: chocolate milk	Baked fish (or rotisserie chicken) + mashed potatoes + green beans
FRIDAY NIGHT BEFORE GAME	Bagel + peanut butter + fruit	Turkey sandwich, pretzels, grapes, milk	Smoothie (milk, banana, frozen berries, PB)	PASTA NIGHT: chicken + pasta (red sauce) + bread + salad — carbs up, early night
SATURDAY GAME DAY	Per the Game Day page (by kickoff time)	Post-match meal within 2 hours	Cooler: chocolate milk, bananas, PB crackers, applesauce	Burrito bowls (rice, beans, chicken, cheese) + milk
SUNDAY REST & RESET	Pancakes + eggs + fruit (family breakfast)	Family meal — rest-day plate (1/3 each)	Popcorn + fruit · prep snack drawer for the week	Roast chicken + potatoes + veg — cook once, use leftovers Mon/Tue lunches

THE SNACK DRAWER + FRUIT BOWL SYSTEM

Stock one drawer and one bowl on Sunday; players self-serve all week: bananas, apples, grapes · PB crackers · pretzels · granola bars · trail mix · applesauce pouches. Fridge zone: yogurt tubes, cheese sticks, chocolate milk boxes, baby carrots + hummus.

SWAP FREELY — THE COLUMNS ARE THE RULE, NOT THE MENU

Any breakfast for any breakfast, any dinner for any dinner. Portions scale with the player — a U10 in a growth phase eating seconds is the plan working. Budget week? Eggs, beans, rice, frozen veg, and store brands hit every target. Halal/kosher/vegetarian: swap the protein 1-for-1 — the plate stays the same.



THE ONE-TRIP GROCERY LIST

EVERYTHING ON PAGES 1-4, ONE CART, ANY SUPERMARKET

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PRODUCE

- ☐ Bananas (big bunch — the MVP)
- ☐ Apples
- ☐ Grapes
- ☐ Oranges (halftime slices)
- ☐ Berries (fresh or frozen)
- ☐ Baby carrots
- ☐ Broccoli (fresh or frozen)
- ☐ Green beans (fresh or frozen)
- ☐ Salad kit
- ☐ Potatoes / mashed-ready
- ☐ Lemons or limes (water flavor)

DAIRY & EGGS

- ☐ Milk (2 gallons)
- ☐ Chocolate milk (jug or lunchbox boxes)
- ☐ Greek yogurt tub + yogurt tubes
- ☐ Cheese sticks
- ☐ Shredded cheese
- ☐ Butter
- ☐ Eggs (18-count)

PROTEINS

- ☐ Chicken breasts or thighs
- ☐ Rotisserie chicken (the weeknight cheat code)
- ☐ Ground turkey or lean beef (2 lbs)
- ☐ Deli turkey & ham
- ☐ Fish fillets or fish sticks
- ☐ Canned black beans / refried beans (3 cans)
- ☐ Peanut butter (big jar)
- ☐ Hummus

GRAINS & BREAD

- ☐ Whole-grain sandwich bread (2 loaves)
- ☐ Bagels
- ☐ Tortillas / wraps
- ☐ Spaghetti + 1 more pasta shape
- ☐ Pasta sauce (2 jars)
- ☐ Rice (big bag)
- ☐ Oatmeal
- ☐ Whole-grain cereal
- ☐ Pancake mix
- ☐ Granola

SNACK AISLE

- ☐ Peanut butter crackers
- ☐ Pretzels
- ☐ Granola bars (simple ones)
- ☐ Trail mix
- ☐ Applesauce pouches
- ☐ Popcorn
- ☐ Jelly / jam
- ☐ Fruit cups (in juice)

FREEZER & EXTRAS

- ☐ Frozen berries (smoothies)
- ☐ Frozen veg backup bags
- ☐ Taco kit / taco seasoning
- ☐ Salsa
- ☐ Sports drink (per this guide's rule only)
- ☐ Water bottles or a good refillable
- ☐ NOT on the list: soda, energy drinks

THE 10-MINUTE SUNDAY SETUP

Roast the chicken · boil eggs · fill the snack drawer and fruit bowl · pack Saturday's cooler list on the fridge door · freeze two water bottles. Ten minutes on Sunday runs the whole week.



HYDRATION, GROWTH & QUICK ANSWERS

THE U10-SPECIFIC ANSWERS

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HYDRATION — THE BOTTLE RULE

A full bottle **with every meal**, one **at school**, one **at practice** — the baseline. Game days and SC summer: start the day before; urine should look like pale lemonade, not apple juice. Sessions this short need **water only**. Sports drinks are for extreme-heat tournament days at most — and never instead of water.

GROWING AT 8–10

Steady growth, not spurts yet. **Calcium x3 daily** and outside play for vitamin D. Appetite swings week to week are normal — serve the structure (3 meals + 2 snacks) and let them decide how much. **Sleep 9–12 hours** — it is the whole recovery plan at this age.

QUICK ANSWERS

“They barely eat dinner after practice.” Normal — they're tired. Lead with the recovery snack right after training, keep dinner small and familiar, add a bedtime glass of milk.

“Do they need sports drinks like the big kids?” No. Water covers everything at this duration. The habit to build now is the refillable bottle, everywhere.

“Should I worry about how little/much they eat?” Watch the week, not the meal. Energy, mood, and growth on track = fine. Real concerns → pediatrician, not portion policing.

“Treats at tournaments?” Concession-stand fun is part of childhood soccer. After the last game, enjoy it. Before games: stick to the cooler.

“They want what their teammate has.” Use it — the team cooler is the best picky-eating tool ever invented. Stock it with the good defaults.

A NOTE ON FOOD TALK — CLUB POLICY

Adults at Soda City FC do not comment on players' bodies or weight, label foods “good” and “bad,” or attach food to punishment or reward — at any age. We talk about fueling, energy, and recovery — full stop. If eating habits ever worry you, the right first call is your pediatrician or a registered dietitian, and the club will support quietly and completely.

DISCLAIMER

This guide is general fueling guidance for healthy U10 athletes, not medical advice. Food allergies, diabetes, coeliac disease, vegetarian/vegan or religious diets, and any medical condition change the details — your pediatrician or a registered dietitian (eatright.org “Find a Nutrition Expert”) personalizes it. Tell your coach and team manager about allergies so the sideline is safe.