

10 Benefits of Drinking Chocolate Milk for Nutrition Recovery

Have you ever wondered why your child's coach tells young athletes to drink chocolate milk after a hard practice? It may sound a bit strange, but actually, chocolate low-fat milk has been shown to help young athletes recover needed nutrition.

What is recovery nutrition?

Recovery is the window of time when your athlete needs to replenish his/her stores of energy after a vigorous workout or activity. Most high school athletes participating daily in two hours or longer of vigorous workouts or younger athletes on highly competitive club teams with equally rigorous workouts can benefit from drinking a glass of chocolate low-fat milk after an intense workout.

10 benefits of chocolate low-fat milk for recovery

- Fluid and electrolytes for hydration
- Protein source for muscle repair
- Carbohydrate source to replenish energy stores for the next practice
- Chocolate in the milk boosts the carbohydrate supplied to your muscles and liver
- Low cost replenishing option
- Often available in the school cafeteria
- Quick and potentially portable
- For some athletes, it may be easier to tolerate a beverage versus food shortly after a workout
- Replenishes necessary vitamins
- It tastes great and kids typically love to drink chocolate milk

Using milk as a recovery fuel will also boost your athlete's calcium and vitamin D intake. You might be surprised to know that vitamin D deficiency among our children is becoming increasingly more common. Vitamin D deficiency can have a serious effect on growing bones and bone strength later in life.

Are fancy recovery powders and beverages better than milk?

Not necessarily. While they are almost always more expensive than milk, some products contain more than you bargained for, including caffeine, herbs, mega doses of vitamins and even contaminants such as melamine and lead. If you find that your athlete prefers supplement beverages, be sure to read the label and choose wisely.

Alternatives to cow milk

Finally, if your child is milk allergic or intolerant other milks are available. Examples of these include fortified soy or almond milk. However, additional protein is needed to match that of cow's milk. This can be supplied by a small handful of nuts, for example.

So, the next time you pick up your athlete after a long practice and dinner is still over an hour away, think about bringing him or her 8-12 ounces of cold chocolate low-fat milk for the ride home. Their muscles will appreciate it.