

SWEET REASONS TO REFUEL WITH CHOCOLATE MILK

By: Felicia Stoler, DCN,
MS, RDN, FACSM, FAND

Do you find yourself confused about which foods and beverages are good for your body?

It seems like headlines and marketing messages encourage certain foods one day and demonize them the next.

This is especially true for sports fueling, hydration and recovery. The good news is—the science around these topics is consistent.

Research consistently shows that consuming chocolate milk after exercise or sports performance is a great way to replenish the important nutrients our bodies need for recovery—carbohydrates, protein, fluids and even electrolytes.

Let's look at why chocolate milk wins for a recovery beverage.

CARBOHYDRATES

Sugar gets a bad reputation, but when it comes to high-level, competitive athletes, sugar plays a very important role in the diet. The carbohydrates we get from foods are broken down into simple "sugar" molecules in the gastrointestinal tract. They enter the blood stream as glucose or fructose. Our bodies then store that glucose as glycogen. During exercise, our body relies on and uses stored glycogen for energy. After exercise, those muscles glycogen stores need replaced. That's where chocolate milk helps. Chocolate milk has both natural milk sugars and added sugars that can be used to replace muscle glycogen stores.

PROTEIN

Muscles also need protein after exhaustive exercise to support the repair and rebuilding of muscle tissues. Chocolate milk has protein, too. Cow's milk is a great source of complete protein, meaning it contains all nine essential amino acids, and, it is high in leucine, which research shows aids in muscle repair and maintenance. The ratio of protein to carbohydrates that chocolate milk offers is ideal for muscle repair.

ELECTROLYTES, VITAMINS & MINERALS

Electrolytes are necessary for maintaining fluid balance in the body, but are lost in perspiration, exhalation and urination. The two main electrolytes lost in sweat are sodium and potassium. Milk has them both. Milk also contains chloride, magnesium and is high in calcium – an important mineral for building and maintaining bones. In fact, milk provides nine essential nutrients our bodies require to function optimally.

HYDRATION

Chocolate milk's story doesn't stop there. It also supplies the most vital nutrient of all—water. Fluid replacement after exercise is critical for proper recovery and by choosing chocolate milk as a recovery beverage, you get that, too.

Water, electrolytes, carbohydrates and protein – each one of these nutrients plays an important role in recovery. Chocolate milk has them all.

CONVENIENT & INEXPENSIVE

While you can certainly make your own, chocolate milk is convenient, inexpensive and can be found in many locations including many quick-serve restaurants and supermarkets. There are even shelf-stable varieties that can easily be taken on road trips and chilled before consumption. Taste drives consumption, and chocolate milk tastes great!

Now you can see why it's often referred to as the "drink with benefits."



AMERICAN DAIRY
ASSOCIATION

AmericanDairy.com

 @AmericanDairyNE

