



Ask A Nutritionist! by Tara Postnikoff

Q: Many runners enjoy a glass of chocolate milk after their long runs. Is this a good choice?

A:

Your post-run recovery meal or snack is critically important when you are maintaining a heavy training volume and trying to improve athletic performance. It needs to re-hydrate you (replace lost water and salts), replenish glycogen (energy) stores and repair damaged muscle tissue so you can be ready for your next training session. Recently, chocolate milk has been marketed as the ideal post-workout recovery beverage. It's relatively inexpensive, easy to acquire and contains carbohydrates and protein in an ideal post-workout ratio. Chocolate milk has more calories and more carbohydrates than regular milk, so chocolate milk is better post-workout.

Chocolate milk may be an okay choice for some, but if you can't tolerate milk well all the time, then avoid it post-workout when your digestion may be further impaired. People with lactose intolerance or milk

protein allergies aren't able to digest milk, which can lead to gastrointestinal issues, such as bloating, cramping and diarrhea, that will delay or inhibit recovery. Consuming any food that you can't tolerate well or have an allergy to will only decrease recovery and performance.

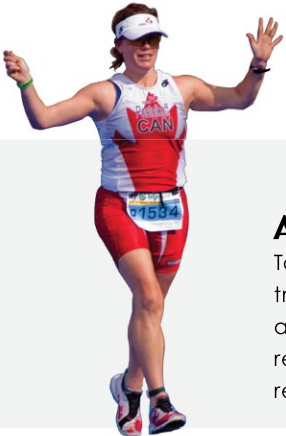
There is no one-size-fits-all recovery meal or product. Every runner has different post-run nutrition goals and needs. Whatever your recovery meal or drink, consider the following important points:

- If your goal is performance, have a high-glycemic (think glucose and sucrose) snack within 15 minutes of completing a hard (high intensity) or long (over 2 hours) training session to stop the catabolic cycle and focus on building again. If you are actively trying to lose weight, then proceed to the next step.
- Have a balanced meal within 80 or 90 minutes of completing your workout.

It should contain roughly 3:1 or 4:1 carbohydrate to protein.

- Less is more! Start with a small snack because too much food or drink may overwhelm your system, impairing recovery.
- Make sure it's easy for you to digest. For example, if you have a gluten sensitivity, don't have a bagel after your workout.
- Look for low fat, lower fibre options to improve digestion and absorption times.
- Remember that liquids digest faster than solids.
- Don't rely on only fruits post-workout, because fruit sugar is used to replenish liver glycogen stores first, before muscle glycogen.

Recovery is just one component of your nutrition cycle. It is important to pay attention to all aspects of your nutrition plan throughout your training to ensure you are well fuelled and performing at your best come race day. 🗨️



About Tara

Tara Postnikoff is a registered nutritional consultant and certified personal trainer in Toronto and is the founder of Healthy Eating Active Living. Tara is an avid distance runner and triathlete, a training program instructor and a regular guest speaker for the Running Room training programs. Tara can be reached at tara@heal-nutrition.com or www.heal-nutrition.com.