

[IMAGE]

Put Down the Gatorade, Pick Up the Chocolate Milk

By Editorial Staff

Since 1969, when Gatorade officially hit the U.S. market, the sports drink industry has been soaring. Stop by any field or gym on any given day and you'll undoubtedly see participants in various sports using these products. But are sports drinks your best option when it comes to recovery during and following intense exercise?

Not necessarily, suggests a study in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. The review study analyzed the results of 12 previous studies in which researchers compared how chocolate milk – yes, chocolate milk – influenced exercise recovery compared to a sports drink or a placebo drink (one without any recovery benefits). In the studies reviewed, participants (athletes) performed exercise tests such as running or cycling, and researchers evaluated various markers to determine how each of the beverages impacted recovery.

Overall, chocolate milk appeared to lengthen the time it took athletes to reach exhaustion and improved other exercise recovery markers equal to sports drinks, and in some cases, proved superior to sports drinks. In fact, while the researchers caution more studies are necessary, they conclude: "[Chocolate milk] provides either similar or superior results when compared to placebo or other recovery drinks."

chocolate milk - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark So, what could account for chocolate milk's recovery potential? Simple: It contains carbohydrates, protein and fat, plus water and electrolytes - all of which are required during exercise, particularly prolonged and/or intense exercise, to maintain energy, prevent dehydration and help muscles recover. Look for a chocolate milk brand that minimizes added sugars – after all, a chocolate milk *shake* probably won't help athletic performance or recovery nearly as well! Talk to your doctor to learn more.

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