

## NUTRITION TO MAXIMIZE RECOVERY

Soccer players use carbohydrate as the primary source of fuel during exercise. After a hard workout or game you're running on empty – muscle stores of carbohydrate are depleted. Eating and drinking the right kind of fuel after exercise is important for you to restore your energy level and repair muscle damage. Refueling with carbohydrate, some protein and fluids ***within 30 minutes after exercise will help your muscles recover faster.*** Within the next two hours, continue the recovery process with a meal that includes carbs, protein, antioxidants, and fluids.

### Goals for immediate recovery (within the first 30 minutes):

- Replenish your muscle fuel stores (glycogen) by consuming carbs. Glucose from glycogen is your muscle's primary source of fuel during high intensity activity (it's like gas for your body). After exercise, your fuel tank is on empty and must be re-filled. **Practical application: Eat/drink carbs right after exercise to begin re-fuel. Examples: nutrition shake, energy bar, granola bar, bagel, pbj sandwich, fruit, whole grains (bagel, cereal, oatmeal).**
- Restore your body's water/hydration status. Replace electrolytes lost through sweat. Electrolytes (sodium, potassium, chloride) are needed for re-hydration and to regulate water balance in your body. **Practical application: Drink a sports drink with carbs and electrolytes.**
- Repair muscle tissue that was damaged during exercise. Protein is needed to repair and rebuild muscles. **Practical application: Include protein. Examples: nutrition shake, energy bar, peanut butter, yogurt & fruit, cereal & milk, oatmeal, nuts & seeds.**
- Help the immune system handle the stress and damage caused by exercise. **Practical application: Include protein and anti-oxidants. Examples: fruit & yogurt shake, fruit & low-fat milk, fruit smoothie with yogurt, trail mix with nuts/dried fruit.**

### Goals for continued recovery (within 2 hours later):

- Eat a meal that includes carbs ( fruit, vegetables, potatoes, and whole grains from pasta, bread, rice, cereal) along with lean protein (chicken, beef, fish, cheese, nuts, eggs, milk, yogurt) and antioxidants (fruit, veggies) PLUS additional fluids.

Suzanne Nelson, Sc.D.,R.D. [nutritiongameplan@gmail.com](mailto:nutritiongameplan@gmail.com)