Post-Match Recovery Nutrition

NUTRITION & HYDRATION

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FUEL | HYDRATE | RECOVER

1 RECOVERY STARTS WITH NORMAL FOOD

After football, the priorities are simple: replace fluid, restore energy and provide protein as part of a normal balanced meal or snack. Young players do not need complicated recovery products in most situations.

QUICK RECOVERY SNACK IDEAS

- Milk or yoghurt + fruit.
- Sandwich or wrap with a protein filling.
- Toast + eggs.
- Cereal + milk + banana.
- Yoghurt + granola/oats + fruit.
- Smoothie made with milk/yoghurt and fruit.

MAIN MEAL IDEAS

- Rice, potatoes or pasta + chicken/fish/beans + vegetables.
- Wraps or sandwiches + protein filling + salad/fruit.
- Eggs + toast/potatoes + vegetables.
- Family meal built around carbohydrate, protein and colourful fruit/vegetables.

2 WHEN DOES TIMING MATTER MOST?

- For a single match with no more football that day, the next normal meal is often enough.
- If another game or demanding session follows soon, offer food and fluid earlier so recovery begins straight away.
- Tournament days make planning more important because the recovery window between matches may be short.

3 REHYDRATION

- Encourage steady drinking after the match rather than consuming a very large amount all at once.
- Water is suitable in most cases. Milk can also contribute fluid and nutrients after exercise.
- Heavy sweaters, very hot conditions or repeated games may justify an electrolyte-containing drink alongside food.

4 WHAT ABOUT PROTEIN SHAKES?

Most young players can meet recovery needs with ordinary food and drinks. Supplements are not automatically better, can add unnecessary cost, and may carry contamination or inappropriate-ingredient risks. Any supplement use for a child should be discussed with a qualified healthcare or sports nutrition professional.

RECOVERY FORMULA: drink + carbohydrate-rich food + a useful protein source + normal rest.

5 CLUB CHECKLIST

- Water available immediately after activity.
- Parents know whether players need food before travelling home.
- Tournament schedules include planned snack/meal opportunities.
- Food allergies and individual dietary needs are respected.
- Coaches avoid making comments about body weight, dieting or food restriction.

This resource provides general nutrition and hydration guidance for young players and is not individual medical or dietetic advice. Needs vary with age, growth, health, allergies, activity level and conditions. Parents and clubs should seek advice from a qualified healthcare professional or registered dietitian where appropriate.