



## Press Release

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For Immediate Release

# LTA Prioritises Female Athlete Health with Bespoke Initiatives

The LTA is making female athlete health a top priority, implementing a series of bespoke and tailored initiatives to support British women's tennis players. From medical screening to education, nutrition, and research, the LTA is ensuring female athletes receive the comprehensive support they need to optimise and enhance performance and well-being.

## Comprehensive Female Health Support: The Four Pillars

The LTA's commitment to female athlete health is built on four key pillars: **Medical Health Screening, Education, Nutrition, and Research**. Each pillar has been designed to address specific challenges female athletes face, offering targeted interventions and expert guidance.

### Medical Health Screening

Recognising the unique health needs of women athletes, the LTA provides all professional players supported via the LTA Player Pathway with medical screenings tailored around female health and menstrual cycles. This initiative includes a 'one-stop shop' for players (identified through the screening process) who require it, can consult a gynaecologist for scans, contraceptive advice, and raise any general women's health concerns. This service ensures that female athletes have access to specialised medical support tailored to their physical and reproductive health needs.

### Education

The LTA has launched the **Female Athlete Health Initiative**, a comprehensive online resource on the LTA Player Portal, which offers educational content, including a podcast series addressing key topics such as 'Periods and Performance,' 'Contraceptive Choices for Elite Sportswomen,' and 'Common Menstrual-Related Issues in Female Players.' Hosted by LTA Chief Medical Officer, Dr Guy Evans, the podcast series features discussions with leading experts to highlight and educate critical female health issues that impact elite athletes.

### Nutrition

Proper nutrition is vital for female athletes, influencing everything from bone health to menstrual regularity. The LTA, led by expert nutritionist Dan Ellis, is educating players to prevent low energy availability that can lead to conditions such as stress fractures and disrupted menstrual cycles as well as Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S). The initiative includes guidance on optimal nutrition strategies to support bone density, muscle recovery, and overall athletic performance.

## Research

The LTA is actively driving forward research to better understand and mitigate health risks for female athletes. **DEXA scanning** (Dual-Energy X-ray Absorptiometry) has been introduced to assess bone mineral density, providing vital data on injury prevention and energy balance. Additionally, the LTA has partnered with dermatologists to conduct skin screenings, ensuring early detection of potential skin cancers, an essential preventive measure for athletes exposed to prolonged sun exposure. Identifying normal DEXA scores for elite tennis players rather than comparing scores to the general population will allow for more accurate and bespoke medical advice, guidance and prediction of injury.

## Pregnancy Policy

In line with its holistic approach to female athlete health, the LTA has introduced a **Pregnancy and Maternity Policy** – the first of its kind in British Tennis – to support players through pregnancy and postpartum recovery. Female athletes enrolled in programs such as PSP (Performance Support Programme) will continue to receive services and support, maintaining a connection with the LTA throughout their maternity journey. This initiative aims to compliment the recently launched PIF WTA Maternity Fund Program, which offer comprehensive maternity benefits to self-employed female players. The LTA's policy was developed over 18 months, with input from current and former British tennis players, ensuring it meets the needs of today's female tennis professionals.

LTA National Coach and former British No.1 Katie O'Brien added: *"The sporting health of our athletes is significantly important to us since this is awareness of female health has been growing massively in recent years since I was a player. We would like to thank Dr. Guy Evans for his leadership in driving work forward so we are able to support our British female players the best that we can and help them achieve their best performance."*

In addition, the LTA has been focussing on additional areas of Female Athlete Health such as:

## Breast Health and Bra Fitting Initiative

In late 2024, the LTA launched a **Breast Health and Bra Fitting Service** for female players, highlighting the importance of wearing a correctly fitted sports bra for both performance and breast health. Research indicates that many women wear the wrong size sports bra, negatively impacting their comfort, support, and even their athletic performance. Working with **Professor Joanna Wakefield-Scurr** from the University of Portsmouth's Research Group in Breast Health, the LTA collaborated with leading activewear brand **Lululemon** to provide professional bra fittings and high-performance sports bras to female players. Professor Wakefield-Scurr, known as 'The Bra Professor,' stated: *"We are delighted to collaborate with the LTA to educate players on breast health. Proper sports bra support is essential, as the breast tissue has no muscle structure, making external support crucial to prevent pain, tissue damage, and performance issues."*

## UK Sports Gynaecology Conference

For the past two years, the LTA has hosted the **UK Sports Gynaecology Conference** at the National Tennis Centre, bringing together chief medical officers, gynaecological surgeons, and sports science experts to discuss and advance female athlete health. The 2025 event

saw over 50 industry leaders gather in Roehampton, tackling issues such as low energy availability, gender-specific concerns in sport, and effective medical strategies for female athletes.

Dr Guy Evans, LTA Chief Medical Officer, said: *“These conferences provide a dedicated forum to discuss the care of elite female athletes across sports and disciplines. It allows sharing of knowledge, open discussion and healthy debate ensuring we provide optimal care for our female athletes. The conferences shine a light on some of the key topical issues such as low energy availability, sex and gender related issues in sport, and effective strategic planning related to the female athlete with the sporting setting.”*

### **A Commitment to Female Athlete Well-Being**

Through these innovative and tailored initiatives, the LTA is setting new standards for female athlete health and support in tennis. By addressing medical needs, providing essential education, prioritising nutrition, and driving research, the LTA is empowering female athletes to thrive both on and off the court.

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### **ABOUT THE LTA:**

*The LTA is the National Governing Body of tennis and padel in Great Britain, governing and growing the sport from grassroots participation through to the professional game. Our vision is to open up tennis and padel, harnessing them and working with schools, volunteers, coaches and venues across the whole country to transform communities. We also represent the interests of over 2,000,000 Members, playing on more than 23,000 courts. The LTA runs and supports a network of 11,500 approved tournaments for players of all ages, the main cornerstones of which are the LTA’s premier grass-court tennis events at The Queen’s Club, Nottingham and Eastbourne, leading up to The Championships, Wimbledon. For further information about the LTA and tennis and padel in Britain, visit [www.lta.org.uk](http://www.lta.org.uk) or follow us on X, Instagram, Facebook, Tik Tok, and LinkedIn.*