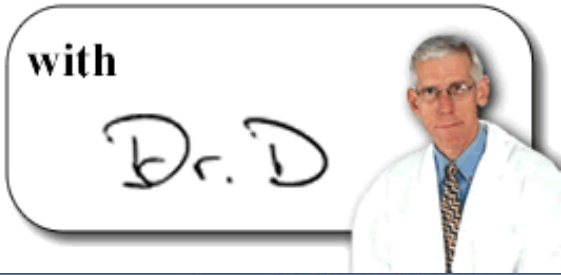




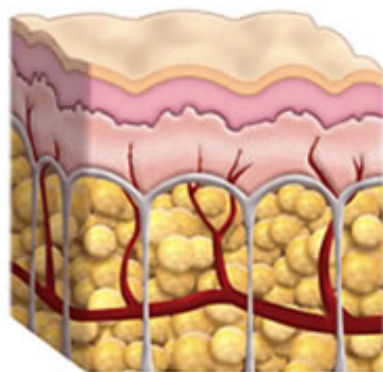
# Health Tips

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## Health Tip: What works for cellulite (and what doesn't)?



First of all, let's be clear: cellulite is fat. Cellulite is not a medical term, but a term that was coined in European salons and spas to describe deposits of dimpled fat found on the thighs and buttocks of up to 90% of women. Cellulite occurs primarily in women, rather than in men, because of the configuration of connective tissue that separates fat cells into compartments. The connective tissue in women has a honeycomb configuration, rather than the crisscross pattern in men, which allows fat to protrude, creating the

characteristic "cottage-cheese" pattern.

Cellulite development also appears to be under the influence of hormonal factors, with most cellulite developing in the post-adolescent period. Despite the opinion of many that cellulite is a "normal" condition in women, an internet search for "cellulite treatment" revealed over a million entries. Special washcloths, loofah sponges, creams and gels to "dissolve" cellulite, vitamin and herbal supplements, massagers, rollers, body wraps, toning lotions, electrical muscle stimulation, vibrating machines, "enzyme" injections, liposuction, and massage are just a few of the treatments that are touted at these sites. Despite a prolific number of treatments, there has been scant research performed to evaluate most of these and only a tiny number have received FDA approval. Let's look at some of the treatments that work and some that don't.

**Weight Loss.** One of the most effective treatments for cellulite is weight loss. Of course, this is best done through healthy means such as a sensible calorie restricted diet and exercise. This makes sense when you consider that having less surplus fat makes it less likely to protrude through the connective tissue. Weight loss is not always successful, however, as genetics also has a major bearing on whether or not cellulite develops. Even women of ideal weight can have cellulite.

**Cardiovascular exercise and weight training.** There is some evidence that along with weight loss, a program that includes cardiovascular exercise (walking, jogging, cycling, etc.) and strength training can help improve the appearance of cellulite. The cardio portion is best done for 30-40 minutes, 3-4

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times per week. The strength training program involves [calisthenic-type exercises](#) that include the use of small dumbbells, ankle weights or resistance bands.

**Endermologie** is a FDA-approved treatment for cellulite which allows for deep tissue mobilization with the use of a hand-held machine to knead the skin between rollers. Up to 14 sessions, at significant expense, may be required to see results. Unfortunately, these results are usually short-lived and follow-up treatments are usually required.



#### **Lasers and radiofrequency systems.**

Two of the newer treatments for cellulite combine either low-level laser energy or radiofrequency (RF) and infrared light (IL) with mechanical massage and suction. Both systems have been shown to produce improvement in cellulite appearance with improvement lasting up to 6 months. In studies comparing the two types of systems, the laser treatment (TriActive) and the RF/IL treatment (VelaSmooth) were found to demonstrate equivalent results.

**Liposuction** is often touted as a treatment for cellulite. While this surgical treatment does remove fat, it does not remove cellulite specifically. In fact liposuction can worsen the appearance of cellulite in cases in which large amounts of fat are removed.

**Buyer Beware.** Body wraps, electric muscle stimulators, bowel cleansers, herbal extracts, mesotherapy (a technique in which substances are injected into layers of fat and connective tissue under the skin), creams or gels to "dissolve" cellulite, most massaging devices, and any "anti-cellulite pills" are ineffective and a huge waste of money.



Genetics and statistics indicate that most women will develop cellulite. Its appearance, however, can be improved by avoiding excess weight and exercising regularly. If more than this is needed, by all means stick with a method that has proven results.

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