

# Cellulite Treatments: What really works?

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## Overview

Do you have cellulite on your buttocks and thighs and do not like the dimpled, cottage-cheese like appearance that it causes? Here's everything you need to know about cellulite, including how it's caused and the various treatment options available.

## What is Cellulite?

Cellulite is pockets of fatty deposits that cause the skin to dimple or have a cottage-cheese like appearance. Cellulite commonly occurs around the buttocks, hips, and thighs, but it can also develop on any part of the body including your stomach and arms.



## How is Cellulite Caused?

The exact cause of cellulite is unknown. The development of cellulite involves the interplay between fibrous bands that tether the skin to the underlying muscle and the collection of fat cells in the skin. As the fat cells accumulate, the fat cells bulge toward the surface and the bands tighten, giving off the characteristic dimpled, cottage-cheese, or orange-peel-like appearance.

Cellulite can occur in people regardless of their body type. However, according to the results of a 2015 review, approximately 80% to 90% of post-pubertal women experience cellulite.

Some common causes of cellulite include:

- genetics
- weight gain
- lack of exercise
- changes to hormones
- aging, including the loss of your skin's elasticity

## What are the Different Types of Cellulite Treatments?

While cellulite poses no risk to your health, many people do not like the way it looks and seeks treatment to prevent or avoid it forming in the first place.

A dermatologist can accurately diagnose your cellulite and recommend a treatment regimen that works for you. The most common treatment options for cellulite include:

### **Laser and Light Treatment**

Laser treatment works by stimulating the remodeling of collagen and increasing circulation in the tissues where cellulite is most prominent. As a result, this can smoothen the surface of your skin and reduce the appearance of cellulite. There are other types of laser treatment available, including options that break down fat and cut connective tissue that causes the skin to tighten.

### **Acoustic Wave Therapy**

An energy-based therapy, acoustic wave therapy works by increasing blood flow and stimulating collagen production. This non-invasive procedure, which makes use of either focused shock waves (ESWT) or radial shock waves, requires several treatment sessions before a change in the appearance of your cellulite can be visually seen.

### **Subcision**

Subcision is a surgical cellulite treatment that works by breaking down the tough, fibrous bands that pull on your skin. These bands are responsible for causing the fat under to produce the characteristic dimpled appearance on the skin's surface. Subcision offers patients a long-term decrease in cellulite, however, the procedure requires a few weeks of downtime before resuming your daily routine.

## **Creams and Lotions**

Topical creams and lotions containing retinoids, caffeine, and botanical extracts, are available to help reduce cellulite, however, research studies indicate that they provide little benefit if used alone. Instead, they may increase their effectiveness if combined with another form of treatment.