

STOPPING CELLULITE:

What Really Works

By Michelle F. Solomon

Although there's a multimillion dollar business based on getting rid of it, the fact is that cellulite still remains something of a mystery. "Basically, we don't completely understand what cellulite is," says Leslie Baumann, M.D., author of *The Skin Care Solution*. The most popular belief is that it's caused when pockets of fat get packed into chambers under the skin. Capillaries break down and fluid seeps into the tissue, which in turn causes the dimpling of the skin and the unfortunate resemblance to cottage cheese.

MOVING AND MASSAGE

Because lymph fluid plays a role in cellulite, Baumann says the best way to battle it aren't the heavily advertised creams and lotions, but rather the practice of deep breathing (yoga works well) and weight-bearing exercise. Personal trainer Jennifer Gray has this piece of advice: "Cellulite's enemy is movement. Do anything that increases your circulation."

Massage is another technique to get the lymph fluids flowing, mostly due to the ability of massage to get rid of toxins and push them out of the body so that they eventually drain away.

SCIENCE VS. CELLULITE

Meanwhile, scientists are still hard at work to solve this battle of the bulge. Baumann says an ultrasound technique looks "promising." Ultrasound massages the skin, thus causing the fat cells to break up so that the fat is eventually excreted. Another scientific solution is endermologie, a



technique that uses a machine to fragment fat cells. Developed in the 1980s, it was the first treatment approved by the FDA to allow the claim of "temporary reduction of cellulite." (The key word to note is "temporary.") The massage machine has two rollers and a suction device that are applied over the trouble spots to help increase circulation.

SKIP THE CREAMS

What about the anticellulite creams? Baumann says that products with caffeine to stimulate the skin and the ingredient theophylline to shrink fat cells are a temporary solution—good for a quickie tightening for a day at the beach. "These products will dehydrate the fat for about 24 hours," observes Baumann. Beyond that, they offer no significant benefit.

THE BULGY BOTTOM LINE

Experts agree that there is no quick fix for cellulite, and that the bottom line for bulgy thighs and buttocks is not expensive products or treatments that promise results with no effort. What has proven most effective are techniques that purify the body of toxins by utilizing a combination of exercise, promoting proper circulation and eating healthy foods that are free of preservatives.