

The Best Way To Beat Cellulite

By Cassandra Forsythe-Pribanic, PhD, RD



Cottage cheese



Orange Peel



Rice Pudding

Even though this sounds like it, I'm not talking about food here. These are just some of the names given to an undesirable skin condition known as cellulite that plagues the backsides and tummies of women all over the world.

Sure, some men are affected by it, but for the most part, *women's biggest fear about wearing a bikini in the summer is the dimply appearance of her butt and thighs or mid-section.* And, women don't even have to be considered "chubby" or "fat" to have cellulite in the most awkward of places. Even our beloved, so-called perfectly thin actresses have cellulite that they work incredibly hard to hide.

But why is it that women are mostly stricken with mattress-like backsides and how do we prevent it or minimize its appearance?

What is cellulite?

Cellulite consists of several alterations in your skin's normal structure, coupled with circulation issues (fatty areas of cellulite tend to have low blood flow and are cold to the touch), and changes with the fat cells themselves.



If you have cellulite, there isn't much you can do to abolish it, but you can definitely reduce its appearance.

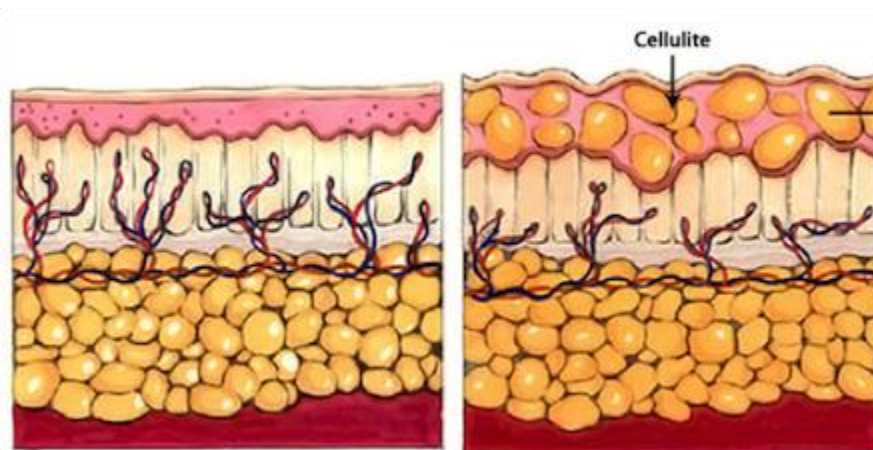
Even Babies Have Cellulite

My first realization about cellulite came when I noticed my 7-month old daughter had a cottage cheese-like appearance to her cute little butt cheeks when they were slightly squished.

At first I was upset – why does she have cellulite? How is this possible? But then I realized my own battles with cellulite were partially out of my control. Females, by virtue of our hormonal environment and body structure are stricken with cellulite from the very beginning.

Normal, healthy, fatty tissue development (growth of new fat cells, not fat cell size) begins in the womb and continues until a child is 18 months old. It then picks up again during puberty. In today's society, with all the junk food and excessive calories, some children are in a constant state of fat cell growth and potentially new fat cells.

Fatty tissue near the skin consists of two layers separated by a fascial layer. The more external layer is called the areolar layer, which is formed by globular and large fat cells (adipocytes) arranged vertically; here the blood vessels feeding the fat cells are numerous and fragile. The deeper layer is called the lamellar layer and the cells are fusiform, smaller and arranged horizontally; the vessels here are larger. The second layer increases in thickness when a person gains weight, mainly due to the increase in fat cell volume which presses against the outer, areolar layer, making it more pronounced.



In women, the outer areolar layer is thicker and the skin covering it is usually thinner which is the case right from birth (and explains my daughters dimply butt cheeks). As a woman ages and gains more body fat from an increase in the inner lamellar layer, it makes the fat cells in the areolar layer more visible.

Female hormones can be evil

When women start to hit puberty, the battle with thigh cellulite commences. The femoral region of a woman (the back of the upper thigh) is very responsive to her very unique hormonal profile.

Estrogen increases the response of thigh fat cells to anti-lipolytic alpha receptors (preventing fat breakdown and loss) and stimulates an enzyme called lipoprotein lipase (LPL) that stimulates fat growth. This can occur in the gluteal region and abdomen as well, but is usually localized to the back of the legs.

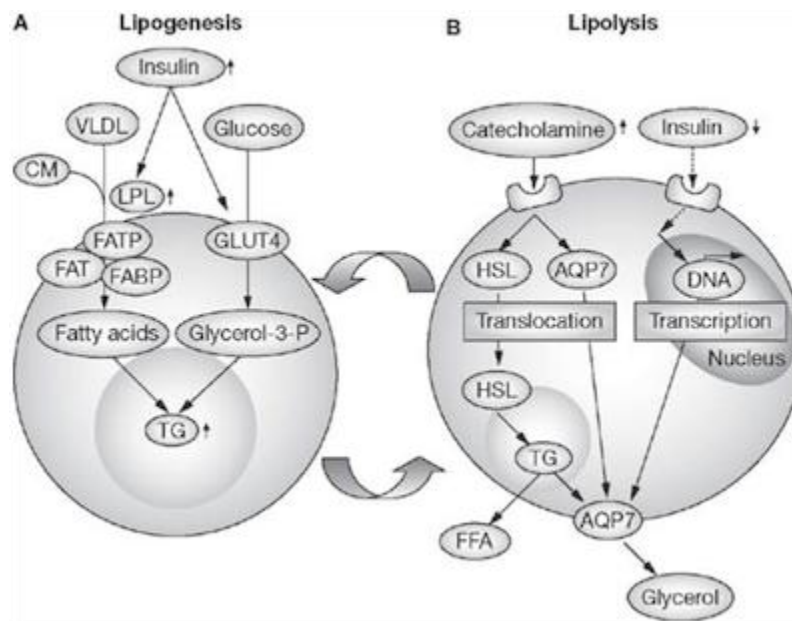
Prolactin (the breast-feeding hormone) is another hormone that makes cellulite more visible because it increases water retention in the fatty tissue, which makes each cell look larger and more lumpy.

So, most women are going to have some issues with cellulite, just because they are women.

Insulin make cellulite more visible

One of the greatest influences on cellulite appearance is the blood glucose-regulating hormone insulin. Whenever you eat carbohydrate, your body releases insulin to manage the influx of glucose (from carbs) into your bloodstream. In an ideal world, your muscle cells recognize this insulin and invite the glucose into muscle cells to be used for energy or stored for later use (as glycogen).

However, in the case of most sedentary people, insulin sends the carbs to fat cells to be turned into fatty acids and stored as triglycerides (called lipogenesis). This makes fat cells in the lamellar layer bigger, causing fat cells in the areolar layer to be squished out and more visible.



Unless a person is a constant exerciser or exercises incredibly hard every day, high carb diets will cause your body to produce more fat. Insulin also stops your body from using fat as fuel and can cause your body to store more water, pushing cellulite out for the world to see.

Change your lifestyle, smooth out cellulite!

Of all the things under our control with respect to cellulite, there are two major things we can change to minimize its appearance. With cellulite, you either have it, or you don't (lucky girl!), but if you have it, you can make it look less pronounced despite never really being able to get rid of it.

First and foremost – get off your butt! Consistent physical activity (no, not armchair football) decreases your body's insulin levels naturally and makes your muscle cells more receptive to burning up carbs and fats for energy.

Daily exercise also increases muscle mass, which helps decrease body fat. It increases circulation in your lower extremities, providing more blood to thigh fat cells and enabling them to be used as an energy source. Finally, it improves rigidity of your tendons and muscles, making fatty areas seem smaller and less pronounced.

You've got to think: all that sitting on your behind, day in and day out, does not do much for improving blood flow to your thighs or making your butt look any smaller. So, get up and move as much as you can -- every day. Even consider investing in a stand-up desk, so your butt can get a break.

Second - eliminate simple carbs, sodium, alcohol and manufactured fats from your diet.

You now know carbs are the major promoters of insulin, but not all carbs are bad and timing is important. High-fiber carbs from non-starchy vegetables (like greens and colorful veggies) produce the least amount of insulin and some starchy veggies (like sweet potato, squash and peas) produce a bit more insulin, but their high fiber content is important. Fiber helps keep your body regular (along with adequate water intake) which improves blood flow in your lower limbs.

Simple carbs, and even fruit carbs are used best by your body after exercise, and sometimes before. At this time, your muscles are primed to use that insulin for repair and re-growth instead of for fat storage.

High sodium, processed foods, like those microwave lunches, have to be packed with sodium to prevent spoilage. This sodium causes water retention and makes cellulite look worse than it is. On the same note, watch out for sodium in canned foods (soups, fish) and focus on fresh, non-processed items as often as possible. Sauces, like soy sauce and teriyaki are also a no-no as they can be both high in sodium and simple carbs.

Alcohol is also an issue – this chemical acts just like insulin, causing your body to store fat and create fat and preventing it from using it for energy. Light beer is not going to help you cause at all. Just limit or stay away from alcohol all the time and your fat cells will be smaller and you'll be happier.

Manufactured fats, such as those found in most boxed and packaged foods are incredibly problematic. First, the poor quality of these fats, which can be trans fats or just excessive polyunsaturated fats, loved to be stored by the body. They also increase inflammation, which leads to water retention and decreased fat breakdown. Finally, they're often associated with high



simple carb foods (cake anyone?)

The best diet to reduce the appearance of cellulite is one that contains high quality, whole-food *proteins* that are not laced with preservatives, sodium, and sugar (foods like organic beef and chicken, organic eggs and purified whey proteins), plenty of colorful *vegetables and fruits* to provide fiber, antioxidants and potassium to balance sodium, and plentiful whole food *fats*, especially those high in unsaturated fats like avocados, egg yolks, fish, fish oil and krill oils, and olives and olive oil.

Don't believe the hype- just do what Mother Nature told you to do.

Everyday you're going to be bombarded with some product, or some new fancy diet that proclaims to be the terminator of all cellulite, but don't buy into those claims.

Fighting the dimply look of cellulite isn't really that hard – you just need to eat real food, food that Mother Nature gave us, and exercise or move your body every day.

Or, pick the right parents and ask for thick skin. But, if it was that easy, the world wouldn't be so interesting.



Courtesy of [McCoy Fitness & Health](#)

- live with passion, purpose, vitality!