

Staying active and making exercise a part of your daily regimen go a long way in keeping the body toned



THANISOCK

Other than being a cosmetic bother, this unwanted fat may be pointing to your not-so-healthy lifestyle. **Nishtha Sabharwal** talks to experts to bring you the low-down

YOU DON'T HAVE TO PUT UP WITH CELLULITE

Myths Facts

M: ONLY OVERWEIGHT PEOPLE GET CELLULITE
F: While it may be more visible in people who are above normal weight, cellulite can affect even the healthiest. If it's genetic

M: SPOT TRAINING CAN HELP GET RID OF CELLULITE
F: You may have heard it from your fitness trainer: there's no such thing as spot reduction. It's the same with cellulite. While exercise can bring down the appearance of it, your body is burning fat all over at the same rate.

M: WOMEN HAVE A HIGHER CHANCE THAN MEN OF GETTING CELLULITE
F: Unfortunately, doctors agree that women have a whopping 85% chance of getting cellulite, as compared to men who have a 10% chance. It's mostly due to the way women's connective tissues are held together

M: CELLULITE CAN HARM YOUR BODY IN THE LONG RUN
F: If you eat healthy food and exercise regularly, you can manage the appearance of cellulite on your body. Aside from an aesthetic concern, cellulite does not necessarily cause any medical problems.

M: AGEING MAKES CELLULITE WORSE
F: As you age, the elasticity of your skin goes down, as does collagen that increases sagging of the skin. Therefore, fat finds more space to protrude, making cellulite more visible.

Have you started noticing a dimply, pimply cheese-like fat layer under your skin? You are not alone. Cellulite is known to affect more than 85% of the women in the world at some point in their lives. Since it affects women more than men, fashion magazines are filled with different ways and treatments to get rid of it. But what is cellulite and is there a need to even get rid of

it. In a woman's body, fat and connective tissue, which lies right under the skin, are placed vertically if the fat cells increase. It gives the impression of cellulite on the surface of the skin. Cellulite is even more prominent in women whose oestrogen decreases, bringing down the circulation of blood in the area. "Whereas in men, collagen fibres are arranged in an X pattern, so lesser fat pockets push towards the skin surface," says Dr Ralina Nahar, cosmologist and dermatologist at Nanavard Super Speciality Hospital in Mumbai.

"Cellulite is most commonly distributed over the thighs, buttocks, flanks, abdomen and arms. Predisposing factors include a familial tendency, excess weight gain, hormonal issues and a sedentary lifestyle. It is far more common in women than men," says Dr MK Shetty, consultant dermatologist and aesthetic laser physician at Vikram Hospital, Bengaluru.

WHO'S MORE PRONE TO IT?

Besides gender and hormonal, there are a few other factors that increase or decrease your chances of getting cellulite. "Unlike popular opinion, it is not related to your weight; even models get cellulite," says Saroj Rao, a dietitian who practises in Delhi. "However, your lifestyle can have a direct effect on it. If you have a primarily sitting job and an inactive lifestyle, your chances of developing cellulite are a lot more. It gets worse with age, as

HABITS MATTER

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Saroj Rao, Dietician based in Delhi

the level of oestrogen starts to fall, bringing down circulation and blood flow." While it is a very small factor, even genetics determine whether you are predisposed to high or moderate cellulite.

SHOULD YOU WORRY?

"Cellulite is essentially a cosmetic problem and carries no medical baggage of its own. However, accompanying obesity and/or the metabolic syndrome when present, is best managed," says Shetty. It needs to be treated only if it poses an aesthetic concern to the person. Cellulite does not necessarily impact overall health of the person. But many shy away from wearing clothes that may show cellulite on their skin.

More than how it looks, Rao says it is more important to keep a check on lifestyle behaviour that can aggravate it. "Eating simple carbohydrates, too much fat and salt can make your cellulite worse. If you are a smoker, drink alcohol and shy away from exercise, the chances of getting cellulite are even more, and it is harder to get rid of as well. Everyone knows the benefits of eating good and exercising, this is just



SOME WAYS TO KEEP IT AWAY

While you may not be able to completely avoid cellulite, here are a few ways to keep it at bay as far as possible

- Reduce or eliminate processed food and simple carbohydrates from your diet
- Keep yourself hydrated and reduce salt intake to ensure that your body remains unbloated
- Pick weights, run, swim or dance! Choose any physical activity that will not only help you reduce weight but also keep your skin taut and smooth
- Quit cigarettes – Smoking brings down the elasticity of your skin, making wrinkles and cellulite appear prominent
- Indulge in deep-tissue massage that may help increase blood flow and alleviate the dimply look of cellulite

one more reason to stick to it," says Rao.

MANAGING IT

There are many forms of treatment, from creams to subcision that have varied effects on cellulite. "There is standalone or combinations of low-level laser and light, RF, shockwaves, endermologie and subcision. Many creams are touted to treat cellulite but are of doubtful efficacy. Mesotherapy also has its advocates. However, treatments by and large lead to temporary improvement, and maintenance is the

norm," says Shetty.

Nahar says creams, which contain caffeine, help shrink fat cells and stimulate blood supply and lymphatic channels. "Retinol creams help improve turnover of cells and appearance of skin. Gentle massage and regular application of creams are needed to see visible results. However, these results are not long-lasting." She also mentions Zwave, a method of applying high energy radial shockwaves to the affected area, to reduce and improve mild-to-moderate cases of cellulite. The tissue around the dimpled area

as breaks apart and leads to a collapse in the gas bubbles within the fat structures.

"Aside from creams and dermatological solutions, it is more important to ensure that the cellulite severity does not increase," says Rao. "For women, it is best to realise that almost everyone has cellulite to some degree. Good eating, exercise and regular massages can give slower, but better and long-lasting results."