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## NEW TREATMENT IMPROVES APPEARANCE OF CELLULITE IN WOMEN

Results from a recent study published in the *Journal of Cosmetic and Laser Therapy* offer hope for women in search of an effective treatment for cellulite. Researchers reported that the use of the new FDA-approved VelaSmooth system resulted in a 50 percent improvement in cellulite appearance after a one-month series of treatments.

According to Tina Alster, M.D., study author and founding director of the Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery, "Approximately 85 percent of women are concerned about cellulite. This isn't just a problem affecting overweight women; even thin women can have cellulite."

Cellulite is a common and disturbing condition experienced by many women after puberty. Marked by irregular skin contour, or dimpling, it most often appears in the thighs and buttocks.

"As a rule, men don't have cellulite," noted Alster. "There are several theories about why the condition affects primarily women."

For starters, women have about twice as much body fat as men.

While the average, normal-weight woman has about 27 percent body fat, the average, normal-weight man has only about 15 percent.

Not only do women typically have more fat than men, their fat is packaged differently. "Cellulite is comprised of small bundles of fat that are encapsulated by fibrous bands of tissue," explained Alster.

While these fibrous bands are commonly observed in the fatty tissue of women, they're rarely

seen in the fatty tissue of men. The female hormone estrogen is thought to play a major role in the development of cellulite.

"Estrogen has a number of positive, protective health attributes, but on the downside, it actively promotes the storage of fat," explained Alster. "Estrogen increases the metabolic rate only about a third as much as the male hormone testosterone, making women far more likely to have fat deposits and cellulite than men."

Given the fact that cellulite is so common in women, and so difficult to get rid of, the results of Alster's recent research are especially welcome. For the study, female volunteers received a total of eight, twice-weekly VelaSmooth treatments on one side of the body, consisting of the buttock and thigh on either the right or left side.

Standardized, digital photographs were taken before and after the treatments and assessed by an independent observer. Leg measurements were taken before, during, and after the treatments.

After just one month, the researchers documented an average reduction in thigh measurement by 0.8 centimeter on the treatment side. Using a uniform grading system, the study authors also reported a 50 percent improvement in cellulite appearance a month after the treatments were performed.

The majority of patients were pleased with their results. Ninety percent of the study participants reported an improvement in cellulite appearance, and 94 percent said they would pursue treatment with the VelaSmooth system on the other side of their bodies.

The VelaSmooth system attacks cellulite in a number of ways, using a combination of infrared light, radio frequency, suction, and massage. While heat from the infrared light source warms the superficial tissue and increases the elasticity of the skin, radio frequency heats the deeper fat deposits, increasing the blood flow to the region.

"The energy from radio frequency increases the metabolism in the tissue and stimulates wound repair mechanisms," explained Alster. "The suction and massage loosen the bands around the fat deposits that cause skin dimpling, and promote drainage of fluid from the area."

Overall, women participating in the study tolerated the treatments very well. The most common side effect was temporary skin redness related to the effects of the massage and heat.

"When the VelaSmooth system is applied to the skin, patients may feel a slight pinch," said Alster. "Skin redness is common, but it is minor and only lasts for a few hours."

One of the greatest benefits of the treatment is that it is nonsurgical and can be performed on an outpatient basis. "Women can have this type of treatment during their lunch hour, and then go back and do all of their regular activities," said Alster.

While the effects of the treatments may last up to six months, they aren't permanent, and monthly treatments may be required to maintain the results. Still, for women who are serious about combating cellulite, monthly treatments with VelaSmooth might be the best nonsurgical option currently available.

According to Alster, "Our study reaffirms our belief that the VelaSmooth system is the most effective treatment to reduce the appearance of cellulite on the market today."

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