Cellulite is a condition in which the skin appears to have areas with underlying fat deposits, giving it a dimpled, lumpy appearance. It is most noticeable on the buttocks and thighs, and usually occurs after puberty.

Cellulite is also known as adiposis edematosa, dermopanniculosis deformans, status protrusus cutis, and gynoid lipodystrophy in the medical field and as orange peel syndrome, cottage cheese skin, hail damage, and the mattress phenomenon in colloquial language.

Cellulite is often classified using three grades:

- **Grade 1** cellulite sees no clinical symptoms, but a microscopic examination of cells from the area detects underlying anatomical changes.
- **Grade 2** cellulite requires the skin to show pallor (pastiness), be lower temperature, and have decreased elasticity, in addition to anatomical changes noted by microscopic examinations.
- **Grade 3** cellulite has visible roughness of the skin (like an orange peel) along with all grade 2 signs.

Although cellulite can affect both sexes, it is much more common in females, mainly because they are more likely to have particular types of fat and connective tissue.

**What causes cellulite?**

The causes of cellulite are not well understood, but there are several theories that have been put forth as explanations. Among these are:

- **Hormonal factors** - hormones likely play an important role in cellulite development. Many believe estrogen, insulin, noradrenaline, thyroid hormones, and prolactin are part of the cellulite production process.
- **Genetics** - certain genes are required for cellulite development. Genes may predispose an individual to particular characteristics associated with cellulite, such as gender, race, slow metabolism, distribution of fat just underneath the skin, and circulatory insufficiency.
- **Diet** - people who eat too much fat, carbohydrates, or salt and too little fiber are likely to have greater amounts of cellulite.
- **Lifestyle factors** - cellulite may be more prevalent in smokers, those who do not exercise, and those who sit or stand in one position for long periods of time.
- **Clothing** - underwear with tight elastic across the buttocks (limiting blood flow) may contribute to the formation of cellulite.

**How can cellulite be removed?**

There are several therapies that have been suggested to remove cellulite, but none have been supported in the scientific or medical literature.

**Therapeutic methods that are physical or mechanical include:**

- pneumatic massages
- massages that stimulate lymphatic flow
- heat therapy
- ultrasound
- radio frequency therapy
- magnetic therapy
- radial waves therapy
- endermologie
- electrical stimulation