

THE ENDERMOLOGIE SYSTEM

Device Appears to Help Reduce Cellulite

BY KATHERINE MAURER
Staff Writer

A large vacuumlike device sucks and kneads skin in order to disorganize adipose tissue and get rid of cellulite. Sound too good to be true?

Maybe not, say some dermatologists and plastic surgeons who are cautiously optimistic about LPG USA's Endermologie system. LPG USA, a Fort Lauderdale, Fla.-based company, is touting Endermologie as a noninvasive way to tone skin and reduce cellulite.

"It doesn't cure heart disease, cancer, or stroke, but it has helped patients," said Dr. Robert Ersek, a plastic surgeon in Austin, Tex. "It doesn't hurt anyone and has a small, but real, effect in some people."

Endermologie—which has been in use for about 12 years in Europe, Asia, and South America—uses rolling suction to reduce edema in fat cells and improve circulation, said Dr. Layne Nisenbaum, a dermatologist in Fort Lauderdale, who has used Endermologie on patients since June 1996. The connective tissues are stretched, allowing the skin to go from the puckered look of cellulite to its normal surface level, he explained.

Currently, there is no standard treatment for cellulite. Liposuction is effective on deeper levels of the skin. Cellulite is more superficial.

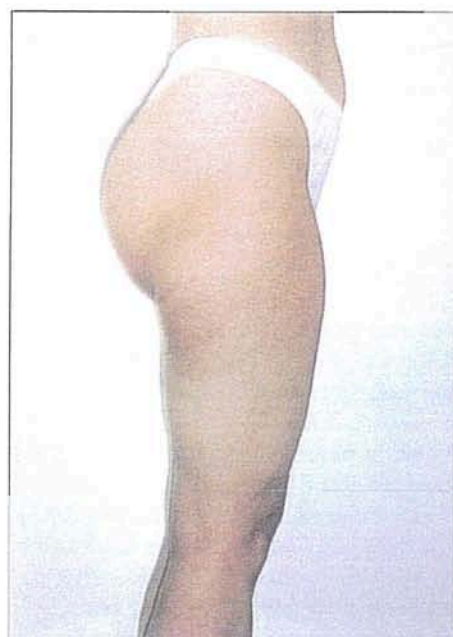
Although there seems to be no harm in Endermologie, "we must be very careful because everyone likes a quick, easy solution. [This is] something people will get excited about," noted Dr. Alan Matarasso, a New York City plastic surgeon.

There is "no instant gratification" with Endermologie, Dr. Nisenbaum agreed.

The company recommends that patients have 14 sessions for maximum effect. Maintenance sessions should follow.



A woman before undergoing cellulite reduction therapy with the device.



The woman after 18 treatments with the noninvasive, vacuumlike device.

PHOTOS ©LPG USA 1996

It takes about seven sessions before results are seen. Most physicians charge about \$100 a session.

"At the end of the year, you've spent \$2,000. In some parts of the country, you can get liposuction for \$2,000 and know that it will work," said Dr. Matarasso, who doesn't own a machine, but says he is "very familiar" with it. (All of the physicians interviewed for this article said they had no financial interest in the device itself or its manufacturer.)

In a study of 22 women conducted by Dr. Ersek and his associates, all experienced "a mean body circumference index loss" after a series of treatments with the Endermologie device. Nineteen of the women also lost weight. Six patients completed all 14 sessions (*Aesth. Plast. Surg.* 21:61-67, 1997).

The technique is user dependent. "An enthusiastic user gets better results," Dr. Ersek noted in an interview.

Additionally, paying money and going once a month for treatment may motivate patients to improve their diet and exercise habits as well. All the experts interviewed by SKIN & ALLERGY NEWS encourage their patients to change their eating habits and start a modest exercise program.

"If someone is getting treatment and is motivated to diet and exercise more, that's great," said Dr. Ersek.

Some investigators, however, believe there is more going on than simple improvements in diet and exercise.

In his study of 26 patients presented at the annual meeting of the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, Dr. Craig Hobar found that the patients who already had a good diet and exercise program before beginning treatments had the best results.

All 26 patients had at least seven sessions of Endermologie. Approximately

Users say multiple treatments with the rolling, suction device can break up cellulite and improve skin appearance.



©LPG USA 1996

60% had positive results: 14% excellent, 27% good, and 23% fair. All patients were encouraged to watch their fat intake and to exercise three times per week, said Dr. Hobar, a plastic surgeon at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas.

"It's frustrating because it's not 100% effective in all patients and we don't know who [it will be effective in] before they invest their time and money," he said.

Still, not everyone is enamored with

the device. The American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery believes that there is no scientific evidence to support the company's claims.

"The effectiveness of this machinery to improve the appearance of cellulite or achieve any temporary or permanent change in body contour has no scientific validation," according to a position statement from the society.

Neither the American Society for Der-

matologic Surgery nor the American Academy of Dermatology has a position on the device.

Literature from the company claims that Endermologie "provides an extremely effective tool when used in conjunction with liposuction."

Some of those interviewed have used Endermologie to "touch up" patients after liposuction.

"Where things are uneven, I'll send patients for a couple of weeks. I've seen a mild improvement," said Dr. Ersek. But it's usually too painful right after surgery. Four or five weeks later seems optimal.

Dr. Hobar thinks it's too early to say how much Endermologie helps in conjunction with liposuction. "It seems to help in getting rid of swelling."

There is currently a study under way to determine what effect, if any, Endermologie has after liposuction. Twelve patients will each serve as their own controls with one leg being treated with Endermologie and the other not. Results are not expected for 4-6 months, said Dr. William Coleman, of Tulane University School of Medicine in New Orleans, chief investigator of the study. ■

Reprinted from SKIN & ALLERGY NEWS, August 1997. Copyright 1997, by International Medical News Group, a division of W.B. Saunders Company.