

Innovative Skin Care at South Orlando Dermatology

In addition to providing care at South Orlando Dermatology, John L. Meisenheimer, M.D., offers information on more than 50 skin-care diseases, conditions and treatments through his Web site, www.orlandoskindoc.com.

With entries in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Guinness World Records and Ripley's Believe It or Not, "Lucky" Meisenheimer is internationally recognized by two diverse groups: swimmers and yo-yo collectors. On a day-to-day basis, John L. Meisenheimer, M.D., is equally respected in the community that he is most happy to serve as a physician and community volunteer.

Named one of the area's "Top Doctors" by Orlando Magazine, Dr. Meisenheimer maintains a private practice, South Orlando Dermatology, and is head of Orlando Regional Healthcare's dermatology department. He is also president of Team Orlando Masters Swimming, a member of the board of directors for the YMCA Aquatic Center, and a former YMCA Volunteer of the Year for his work with Special Olympics.

At South Orlando Dermatology, Dr. Meisenheimer practices general dermatology, including pediatrics and cosmetic services, and dermasurgery which includes traditional skin-cancer surgery and laser surgery. Dr. Meisenheimer embraces the best of new technology — improvements and innovations in skin-care treatments and use of Internet information to aid patients — and the best of traditional medicine — personal care backed by years of experience.

"Although I've been a traditional dermatologist for years, I have really expanded my practice to add a lot of cosmetic and laser treatments," he said. "[However,] I am still the traditional doctor. When you call my office, you don't get a phone tree; you get a real human being. And when you come in to see the doctor, you're going to see me; you're not going to see a paraprofessional. I'm an old dinosaur that feels patients should be seen by a physician. I went into medicine for the traditional reasons one goes into medicine, and I still enjoy seeing my patients."

A Southwest Orlando resident since 1987, Dr. Meisenheimer completed his undergraduate studies at Eastern Kentucky University in 1979 and graduated from the University of Kentucky Medical School in 1983. He served his internship at Tucson Medical Center and dermatology residency at the Medical University of South Carolina, where he was named chief resident.

Describing his passion for dermatology, Dr. Meisenheimer said, "I liked everything I did in medical school, but when I hit dermatology, I knew in two days that that's what I wanted to be. It was just great, and I've loved it ever since. If I had it to do all over again, I would do exactly what I'm doing right now. I love my job. It's different every day. There is so much variety. There are hundreds and hundreds of different skin diseases, and there is a lot of surgery going on in dermatology.

"It's a great feeling," Dr. Meisenheimer said, when he uses his surgical skills to treat a patient with skin cancer successfully.

“The basics of the practice — skin cancer and general dermatology —are about being well-trained and being able to make the appropriate diagnosis and treatment decision. You can have the best treatments in the world, but if you misdiagnose the condition, the treatment is probably not going to be effective.”

Dr. Meisenheimer is board-certified in dermatology; a fellow of the American Academy of Dermatology; two-time president of the Central Florida Society of Dermatology; and member of the American Society of Dermatologic Surgery, American Contact Dermatitis Society, and the Florida Society of Dermatology. Membership in these professional organizations keeps him informed of the most up-to-date advances in dermatology.

“Cosmetically, there have been lots of changes,” he said. “There are much nicer, safer, very effective procedures than there were when I first started dermatology 20 years ago. As technology has advanced, it has made a lot more things available to us that are noninvasive. Anytime you can do a noninvasive procedure over an invasive procedure, you’ve got a real winner there.”

An increase in laser rejuvenation has been the biggest change in his practice. Used to improve skin quality, it requires no anesthesia or downtime. Laser rejuvenation treats broken blood vessels and brown spots and increases collagen in the skin to see a softening of fine wrinkles.

“You can literally have the procedure done over a lunch hour and go to the mall right after having the procedure done,” Dr. Meisenheimer said. “It has gone, in a couple of years, from being a nonexistent procedure to the fourth most commonly done cosmetic procedure in the country.”

In the past, he might have cautioned an individual in his or her 30s to not seek treatment for a condition like minor sun damage because the risk outweighed the benefit. With laser rejuvenation, treatment is tailored for the individual patient, and when administered properly, the benefits far exceed the risks.

Dr. Meisenheimer uses two different rejuvenation lasers — the nd:YAG and the KTP. He also has a CO2 laser and the Excimer laser, one of only two such lasers in use in Central Florida. The Excimer laser is now covered by Medicare and many insurance companies for treatment of psoriasis. One of the advantages of using a laser is that treatment can be limited to the areas of skin involved.

“[Laser rejuvenation] has been a nice added benefit for my patients,” Dr. Meisenheimer said, emphasizing, “I’m very adamant that I see all of the patients who undergo the treatments. It’s great that we have this new technology, but I feel that all patients should be evaluated by a physician before having it done and should be supervised while the treatments are going on.”

South Orlando Dermatology also offers patients laser hair removal and Botox treatments, which relax muscles so that overlying wrinkles will soften.

“Botox is No. 1,” Dr. Meisenheimer said. “It is the most popular procedure, and the reason it is No. 1 is because when people do it, they don’t do it once; they keep coming back because they like it so much.”

In addition to cosmetic procedures, Dr. Meisenheimer offers patients more than 900 cutting-edge skin-care products through his Web store, found online at www.orlandoskindoc.com.

Individuals do not have to be patients of South Orlando Dermatology to purchase these nonprescription products that are typically found only in physician offices.

Dr. Meisenheimer's Web site also offers anyone who has access to a computer information on more than 50 procedures to treat skin diseases and conditions, as well as the latest information on cosmetic procedures.

For example, there is an in-depth look at the pros and cons of Botox with before-and-after photographs.

"What I am proudest of is all the detailed information that we provide on the various procedures so that people can really be informed," he said. "My Web site is actually my Web site. I have written the patient-information sheets. These are my true experiences as a practicing physician."

Dr. Meisenheimer also is compiling his experiences and knowledge into a consumer-friendly book on dermatologic skin care that is expected to be published later this year. Although the new publication may never end up on a shelf at the Smithsonian like his book, *Lucky's Collectors Guide to 20th Century Yo-Yos*, he does anticipate it to be comparable in its comprehensive approach and readability.

In addition to practicing medicine and writing, Dr. Meisenheimer is in his 10th year of coaching Orange County's Special Olympics swimming team, which practices near his Sandlake Commons office at the YMCA Aquatic Center.

"Ten years of having a very consistent team of devoted athletes and a great amount of support has been wonderful," he said. "Special Olympics is like mom and apple pie — it's a win-win situation. It allows [the swimmers] to see that they can succeed in something. They know that they've done something really special in that sport, and that carries on to the rest of their lives."

Dr. Meisenheimer has been swimming competitively for more than 30 years, achieving masters-level national titles and setting masters world records. Six days a week, he hosts the "Aquatica, Enter the Food Chain 1K Swim" at Lake Cane. Hundreds of swimmers, including individuals from 12 different countries, have completed the challenge and earned the right to receive a patch and sign their names on the "wall of fame" in the home he shares with his wife, Jacquie, and sons, John, Jake and Max.

"Life is pretty darn good," he said. "I have a great family. I like what I do. I'm still doing new things, and that's what keeps life interesting."

John L. Meisenheimer, M.D., maintains a private practice, South Orlando Dermatology, which is located at 7300 Sandlake Commons Blvd., Suite 105. For an appointment or more information, call (407) 352-2444.