

# How to choose your medical aesthetic practitioner

Recent growth in the medical aesthetics industry means that we are spoilt for choice when choosing an aesthetic practitioner. There appears to be an aesthetics clinic popping up on every street corner and an avalanche of aesthetics advertised on social media. So how does one choose? This AAMSSA editorial will give you some simple guidelines to choosing your aesthetic practitioner.

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**L**et's start at the very beginning – in terms of both logic and legislation. Remember that aesthetic medicine is just that: medicine! It is very important that you check that your practitioner is a qualified medical doctor, registered with the HPCSA (Health Professions Council of South Africa). In South Africa, only medical doctors are legally allowed to inject dermal fillers, botulinum toxin, biostimulators and threads. Dentists are also qualified to perform aesthetic procedures in the peri-oral area.

## Do they have postgraduate qualifications?

Check if the aesthetic doctor has a postgraduate qualification in aesthetic medicine. While it is not legally required for a doctor to have qualifications in aesthetic medicine, it is reassuring to know that your doctor has taken the time and trouble to study

further and become competent in this sub-specialty.

## Are they a member of AAMSSA?

Is the doctor a registered member of AAMSSA (Aesthetics and Anti-Ageing Society of South Africa)? Doctors who are members of AAMSSA have access to the latest guidelines and protocols in medical aesthetics. AAMSSA doctors have a network of communication with each other, and have immediate access to complication-management teams.

AAMSSA members are automatically members of the international organisations such as CMAC (Complications in Medical Aesthetics Collaborative) and UIIME (International Union of Aesthetic Medicine). If a doctor is not a member of AAMSSA, they will be standing alone, without access to these centers of excellence.

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## Word of mouth

Word of mouth referral is generally very accurate. Having aesthetic procedures done for the first time is quite scary and daunting. But if your friends felt comfortable and secure with their doctor, it's a good sign. If a trusted GP or specialist refers you to an aesthetics colleague, this is most certainly a safe referral.

## Experience

Look at the doctor's experience. How long have they been practising aesthetic medicine? It is a known fact that doctors who are experienced have fewer complications. Experienced doctors will know exactly how to manage a complication should it happen.

What about social media? If you choose your doctor based on how many 'likes' and followers they have on social media, you may be sadly disappointed. While it is interesting and fun to follow certain dynamic doctors on Instagram and Facebook, this does not automatically mean they are good clinical

practitioners. Having a lot of press does not mean the doctor is competent or safe.

Social media will, however, be an excellent guide to doctors' methods and results. Look at the before-and-after pictures to see for yourself if the results are to your personal liking.

Social media will also show you if your doctor is regularly attending workshops and conferences. You'll see if they are training other doctors. These are good signs to look for on social media.

## Red flags

A red flag on social media is when a doctor promotes themselves excessively. Doctors are discouraged by the HPCSA from saying how amazing and superior they are.

If they are advertising specials, competitions, botulinum toxin parties, promoting injectable products and using trade names, they are probably not the best choice. These are all against the HPCSA ethical guidelines. Social media is simple way to check whether the doctor is ethical.

## Holistic approach

Does the doctor have a holistic approach? Aesthetic medicine is about health and wellness – good aesthetic practice is not just skin deep. Your doctor should take a comprehensive medical and surgical history and be aware of your medication and current hormonal status. Lifestyle, mental health and diet are all aspects of aesthetic and antiaging.

Selecting the right doctor for your chosen treatment is key. AAMSSA is committed to the advancement of safe and ethical aesthetic medicine in South Africa and always strives to ensure that the public is protected. A competent aesthetics doctor will have the necessary experience, knowledge and skills, be ethical and safe, practise holistically, and be able to manage side effects or complications immediately and effectively. **A2**

A list of registered AAMSSA doctors can be found on the AAMSSA website: [www.aestheticdoctors.co.za](http://www.aestheticdoctors.co.za)



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