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 Photography

# Care

*a good dose of*

*Summa Cum Laude graduate; Phi Beta Kappa member; Letseizer honor listee; Rhodes Scholar finalist; Arthur C. Curtis scholarship recipient.*

*Dr. Naomi Simon's list of scholarly accomplishments is extensive, there's no doubt; and these credentials, along with her unquenchable thirst for knowledge, both in medical school and since, has helped her become a diligent clinician and an amazing physician.*



*dr. naomi  
simon*

But according to Dr. Simon, a dermatologist at the Mooresville Dermatology Center, there's much more to being a good doctor than knowledge and technical skill. Dr. Simon hasn't lost sight of the fact that a patient wants to know how much you care before they care how much you know.

The care that Dr. Simon shows for her patients is what forms the foundation of her practice. It was while in her second year of medical school, when working with patients who needed to have reconstructive surgery after an accident or surgery for cancer, that Dr. Simon saw the need to connect with the patient on a personal level—and when she discovered that dermatology was the perfect specialty in which to do so.

"During my dermatology rotation, I fell in love with the field of dermatology. I love being able to see patients of all ages—I can see infants and octogenarians in the same day!" said Dr. Simon.

Dr. Simon spends a great deal of her time conversing with her patients about prevention. She firmly believes in the old adage that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," and when you add the compassion she has for her patients into the mix, you have the equation that results in the best possible doctor-patient relationship. This relationship building was so important to Dr. Simon, she enrolled for a semester in graduate-level theology courses prior to medical school, both to strengthen her own faith and to remind herself that patients are whole people who need care for their spirit and soul as well as their bodies.

Studies have shown that when physicians take the time to explain to patients why they are prescribing a particular treatment or medication, what to expect, and how long the treatment will take, there is a much higher usage of the treatment by the patient. "I educate my patients as part of every visit," explained Dr. Simon. "I love knowing patients for a long time and developing a lifelong relationship with them. I will see for many years my patients with skin cancer or chronic diseases such as psoriasis. Seeing patients who have become friends—that's what is incredibly rewarding about the practice of medicine."

One of the ways Dr. Simon is able to educate her patients is by staying informed herself. She and her husband, Miguel, are passionate about medical history, traveling together to places such as Stockholm and Paris to research such

things as what important discoveries were made in that country, how medical treatments have evolved over the years, and how that country or culture contributed to modern medicine and science in general. "I guess that is a somewhat nerdy way to take a vacation, but we love it!" shared Dr. Simon.

Dr. Simon is also interested in her own research: in particular, the relationship between nutrition and the severity of acne. Keeping up with developing medical news is a bit more challenging for Dr. Simon, though, who finds that the barrage of information coming in can be overwhelming for a busy physician, wife, and mother. Miguel is an aerospace engineer, and he helps her stay up to date on the medical news by encouraging her to be tech savvy. "I use all the tools I can, especially the internet, smart phone, and now the ipad, to read and stay abreast of the latest in my field or answer a clinical question. I'll literally be reading something in line at the grocery store or anytime I have down time," Dr. Simon noted.

But with sons Elias, age 3, and Samuel, age 3 months, being her priority, down time is a rare commodity. "I try to have the discipline to completely drop work and focus on my family when I get home. I don't answer phone calls or emails while the boys are awake in the evening; I just focus on them," Dr. Simon explained. This discipline, along with a great support system, has allowed Dr. Simon to juggle her various roles—even when at times she felt like giving up.

"I understand the difficulty so many moms face," Dr. Simon shared. "Having supportive people in your life is key to succeeding as a working mom. I had my own mother nearby to watch Elias when he was born, so that was a huge help to me, and my husband does at least half of the work at home, so I have to give him a huge amount of credit for helping me succeed in my career. Also, my wonderful staff ... they make going to work every day so enjoyable. It's so important that our society takes steps to help women go back to work and feel they have support."

Spoken like a woman who cares! 🐾

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*dr. simon and  
son, sam*