

# Sanova Dermatology

## Couple focuses on sun safety education

By Amy Denney

**D**r. Adam Mamelak knows a lot about the tanning habits of Nicole “Snooki” Polizzi and the rest of the crew from reality show “Jersey Shore.”

The dermatologist who specializes in skin cancer treatment takes note of trends in pop culture to warn his patients about the dangers of tanning beds and squash any myths.

“It sounds funny, but this is what people talk about,” he said. “They see it on TV, they see it in culture and the next thing they do is sign up for a [tanning] package.”

Mamelak and his wife, Dr. Miriam Hanson, met in 2007 in Houston after finishing their residencies. Mamelak is originally from Canada, and the couple worked in Ontario for three years before moving to Austin where Hanson grew up. In April 2012, they opened Sanova Dermatology.

“The idea was that we wanted to bring a new level of care to Austin,” Mamelak said. “... Texas is a very sunny place. It has probably some of the highest skin cancer rates in the country.”

Sanova is a full-service dermatology clinic with Hanson focusing on women’s health issues such as hair loss, adult onset acne and the side effects of tanning beds.

“The interesting thing I find is that young women come to me, and the reason they’re tanning is not necessarily for the tan but to help with acne,” she said.

Although dermatologists use blue light on the color spectrum to help treat

acne, Hanson said the wavelengths in tanning beds are dangerous. She added that tanning beds are also a known carcinogen and can cause cancer.

Hanson also highlights the importance of daily sunscreen use with her patients because it can reduce the risk of developing melanoma by 50 percent.

“The No. 1 thing that ages us is the sun,” she said. “When someone comes in for a cosmetic consult with me, the first thing I talk about is sunscreen because it’s the biggest thing from a prevention standpoint you can do.”

Mamelak’s specialty is Mohs surgery, which removes skin cancer and its roots but saves the healthy tissue. He maps out the tumor to find exactly where the roots are located. He said the entire procedure—including removing the tumor, processing the tissue in the lab and completing reconstructive surgery—is all done at Sanova’s clinic.

“No one likes the word ‘cancer,’ and it’s obviously a bit scary,” he said. “We’ve designed this in such a way that it’s extremely comfortable.”

Specializing in Mohs surgery requires extra training. Mamelak spent a year completing his fellowship in Mohs surgery at the Texas Medical Center in Houston. Mamelak said the procedure is a smart way of treating cancer in patients.

“The biggest thing is by the time they leave here, they know with over 99 percent certainty that the cancer will never come back,” he said. “I don’t know of any other cancer treatment that can give you that kind of cure rate.”



Drs. Adam Mamelak and Miriam Hanson opened Sanova Dermatology in 2012. The couple aims to inform their patients about sun safety to prevent and reduce the risk of skin cancer.



A base of blue polyvinyl gel holds tissue samples. Both are placed on the black dial at the right, and a blade slices layers of tissue for microscope slides.



Mamelak uses microscope slides to analyze tissue during a Mohs surgery procedure to ensure he has removed all the cancerous cells.

### ABCs of SPF

**(A) Broad spectrum:** This means the sunscreen contains ingredients to protect skin from the sun’s ultraviolet A and B rays.

**(B) Sun Protection Factor or SPF:** Use an SPF of 30, which screens 97 percent of the sun’s rays. SPF protection is rated on an S curve. Numbers higher than 30 do not provide significantly more protection.

**(C) Zinc oxide or titanium dioxide:** These ingredients physically block the skin and are often less irritating to skin. Look for an amount of at least 3 percent of these ingredients in a sunscreen.

**(D) Water-resistant:** This indicates how long a user is protected from the sun and will need to reapply sunscreen—either 40 or 80 minutes.

**(E) Application:** Use one shot glass, or 1 ounce, every one to two hours over the entire body. Reapply after swimming or getting wet.

**(F) Daily use:** Wear sunscreen daily on the face, hands, neck and chest. If you are planning on being outside for an hour or longer, reapply and use more coverage.

Sources: American Academy of Dermatology, Skin Cancer Foundation

### Sanova Dermatology

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