Keeping Your Skin Healthy in Austin

Skin cancer is now the most common cancer that affects humans. It is estimated that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer during their lifetime.

“It’s a scary thought,” says Dr. Adam Mamelak, board-certified dermatologist and fellowship-trained Mohs surgeon at Sanova Dermatology, “especially here in Austin!” Dr. Mamelak is referring to the fact that the rates of skin cancer are highest in sunny climates.

With running trails, the Greenbelt, cycling through the hill country and more, so many people are drawn to Austin for its outdoor lifestyle and favorable climate.

“It’s true,” says Dr. Miriam Hanson, board-certified dermatologist and aesthetic skincare expert. “The sun is now recognized as the number one environmental agent that can cause damage to our skin. Exposure to UV rays from the sun have been shown to accelerate skin aging, produce wrinkles and dark spots, and yes, even lead to skin cancer.”

“It’s so common and yet it’s always surprising when we find something,” says Dr. Mamelak. This past year, Dr. Mamelak was nationally recognized by the American Society of Dermatological Surgery for performing more skin cancer screenings than any other physician in his region, which includes Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, New Mexico, Louisiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama. The Society is composed of leading dermatologic surgeons who are recognized for their innovations and commitment to the field of dermatology.

“If you get a sore that doesn’t heal, a new rough or scaly spot that doesn’t go away, or a mole that changes or that doesn’t look right, get it checked out!” Atypical moles will often be asymmetric, have irregular Borders, multiple Colors, and/or a Diameter greater than 6mm (the size of a pencil eraser), or any other Evolution or change such as itching, bleeding, pain or growing.

“I tell my patients to get to know their skin,” says Dr. Hanson. “Skin cancer is real, skin cancer is common, and skin cancer is serious.” Dr. Hanson recommends the following protective measures to enjoy outdoor activities in a “safer and smarter” way:

- Choose a quality, broad-spectrum sunscreen, with a minimum SPF rating of 30. Make sure it protects against both UVA and UVB, which are harmful light rays.
- Use sunscreen everyday on all exposed areas, especially your head and neck areas, forearms, and backs of your hands. Remember your ears and feel as well.
- Reapply your sunscreen frequently, at least every two hours when outdoors. This is particularly important if you are sweating, or swimming.
- Always choose protective, tightly woven clothing including long-sleeved shirts, long pants, sunglasses and a hat with a wide brim.
- Plan outdoor activities early in the morning or later in the day. Avoid direct sunlight from approximately 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Never use a tanning bed, salon, or sunlamp.

Dr. Adam Mamelak and Dr. Miriam Hanson are dedicated to providing the highest quality of skin care with the utmost comfort and compassion.

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