Covid19.

Here we are eight months into the pandemic and no end in sight. This strain of the virus is new and experts all over the world are trying to get to grips with the best way of controlling it until such time as a vaccine is available to prevent it causing havoc to people’s health and lives. We in Ireland have Nphet who are trying their best to recommend the best way of blocking the virus. They don’t always get it right because this is all new to everyone. Then we have a Government, who have different reason for recommending different methods of dealing with the crisis. All this is causing confusion for the general public and more so because the communication methods of Government are causing even further confusion. Added to that is the fact that many people are ‘just fed up’ with the rules and regulations and are trying to live their lives as they have always done. For those, who are abiding by the restrictions, it is difficult to accept the restrictions when they see others ignoring them, and when they see the Government changing the rules on a regular basis.

Very early in the pandemic here we were told to wear masks and face shields in certain circumstances but there was little emphasis on this requirement. However Emyvale.net pointed out that the face shield should not be recommended as they added to the danger especially those handing you something like food, clothing, etc as their breath was blowing the virus, if they had it, down onto the object they were giving you. Then wearing face covering became almost obligatory and then, later still, the shields were not recommended.

We are now in ‘Lockdown’ again and it is very difficult to understand the ruling regarding what is and what is not on the ‘essential’ lists. As well some retail shops can sell things that others are prevented from selling. Some shops, which we would term as ‘non essential’, are open while, what we would term ‘essential ‘, are not allowed to open. On TV Miriam O’Callaghan asked the minister why shops were allowed to sell alcohol while a parent isn’t allowed to buy socks for the child. His reply just added to the confusion as he could not justify the rule but waffled on talking over Miriam and the other person on the panel. His big solution was for the person to go ‘online’ to buy what was wanted or to use ‘click and collect’!!!! Not every household has broadband, not every household could use broadband, not every household has good broadband, not every household can afford broadband – so that rules them out. He said that the whole idea was to make people stay at home - please tell me how they would collect the item by ‘click and collect’?? and make sure they got the correct item and without the chance of seeing what they were buying. There is also the danger that Ebay, Amazon etc would be able to sell the article cheaper, thereby deflecting money out of the local economy. Is it this army of advisors, who were hired after the election, who are misleading the politicians?

We do need to be very careful what we do, where we go and who we talk to and for how long. Many who have picked up the virus did not have a very bad reaction but too many have suffered terribly and are still suffering weeks and months later. Too many families have lost loved-ones without the chance to say goodbye and have a proper wake and funeral. No one knows how they would react if they caught it but it would be better to avoid it altogether. The hospitals are having it tough to deal with the extra workload and the added dangers involved. Big money is being directed to the Covid fight and other services are reduced, postponed or cancelled. This of course has always been the plan by our health services. When a problem arose services were cancelled and money redirected. That is happening on a daily basis at the moment. The waiting lists are growing and growing, the sick are getting sicker, there are more people getting sick and we will be paying for the borrowed money for decades to come. However it is maddening to hear the authorities announcing 23 new beds for Monaghan General Hospital, and so many rejoicing at that, only to discover in today’s NS that there is no money to buy the beds or to hire staff to services the beds. That is another regular occurrence and one of the reasons why the health services find themselves in the pickle they are in today is that the money over the years has not been spent in the most profitable way – when we were fighting for retention of services in Monaghan General Hospital, we kept telling them how to spend the money for patient benefit but they knew better and the Irish public just paid up and will continue to do so.