**Q&A: What Are The Guidelines When It Comes To Shopping And Walking?**

Q. We are told social distancing is key to slowing down the spread of the coronavirus. I hear it is being renamed and called physical distancing, why is that?

A. The World Health Organisation said in recent days it is discouraging the use of the phrase 'social distancing'.

This is to better explain to people that they should not be breaking social contacts with family, friends and neighbours by phoning or using other technology.

They can do that - but still keep a physical distance to ensure the disease does not spread.

**Q. I think many of us have grasped the basics, what are some of those?**

A. Work from home if possible. If you don't need to take public transport during busy times, avoid it.

People should obviously maintain a distance with a person who has the virus. It's all about avoiding gatherings of people.

**Q. What about shopping?**

A. People still need to get food and other essentials. But if you can, try to go when supermarkets are quieter.

This applies to older people and others who have underlying health conditions. Several supermarkets are designating mornings for these groups. You might avoid shopping centres and go to a stand-alone shop or smaller grocery stores.

The more places people visit, the more likely they are going to encounter people with the virus. There could be more surfaces with the virus, such as doorknobs.

Most supermarkets have learned the rules of social distancing early and are good at limiting numbers entering the shop and exercising the distance rule at checkouts.

**Q. What are the rules when out walking?**

A. There is a great hint of spring in the air, bringing some cheer as we face into some troubling weeks. People can still go outside but they cannot behave as normal. Ideally, if you go out for a walk, go on your own and if there is another member of your household with you, you could walk together.

Keep groups small to two if you're going with friends.

Don't mingle with groups in places like the local park. Keep a distance of two metres.

**Q. What about flagrant disregard for the physical distance directive?**

A. There have been reports of pubs which should be closed letting in customers and outside gatherings of people close together drinking alcohol.

Some areas have also seen an influx of day-trippers congregating in groups.

**Q. What about children and play?**

A. Playdates with several children getting together may defeat the purpose.

They can pass the virus on to each other and then bring it home putting their parents, older or sicker relatives at risk.

If there is a playdate, then it should be a very small number. If children are outside, they should maintain a two-metre distance from each other. They should be monitored by a parent.

**Q. Mother's Day was marked in different innovative ways across the country. What of other days of celebration like birthdays and anniversaries?**

A. People have come up with great suggestions.

Some of these include leaving a present on the doorstep of an older mother; having a conversation through the window; having a meal together in different homes but connecting through Facetime; writing a letter or sending a card.

**Q. Is there a cardinal piece of advice to follow?**

A. Wash your hands properly before leaving the house and when you return.

(Source - Irish Independent – News - **Eilish O'Regan – 23/03/2020)**

**Q&A social distancing: From grocery shopping to play dates - just what should we be doing?**

We are told social distancing is key to slowing down the spread of the coronavirus.I hear it is being renamed now and called physical distancing?

The World Health Organisation said in recent days it is discouraging the use of the phrase ‘social distancing’.

This is to better explain to people that they should not be breaking social contacts with family, friends and neighbours by phoning or using other technology.

They can do that but still keep a physical distance to ensure the disease does not spread.

**I think many of us have grasped the basics such as work from home if you can?**

Yes. Work from home if possible. If you don’t need to take public transport during busy times then avoid it. Don’t travel abroad unless its essential. It goes without saying  that people should maintain a distance with a person who has the virus. It’s all about avoiding gatherings of people to reduce transmission.

**What about going shopping?**

People still need to get  food and other essentials. But if you can, try to go when supermarkets are quieter. This applies to older people and others who have underlying health conditions leaving them more at risk. Several supermarkets are now designating mornings for these groups.

You might avoid shopping centres and go a stand-alone shop or smaller grocery stores. The more places people visit the more likely they are going to encounter  people with  the virus on surfaces like doorknobs.

Supermarkets have learned the rules of social distancing early and are very good at limiting numbers entering the shop and exercising the distance rule at checkouts.

**Those shopping carts have a lot of  use by customers all day. Any tips?**

You could wipe down the handles . Several shops have sanitized rolls of wipes.

**What are the rules when out walking?**

There is a great hint of Spring in the air bringing some cheer as we face into some troubling weeks.

**People can still go outside but they cannot behave as normal?**

Ideally if go out for a walk go on your own and if there is another member of your household with us you could walk together. If you want to walk with a friend keep it to just one other person. Don’t mingle with groups in places like the local park. Keep a distance of six feet.

**What about children and play?**

Play dates with several children getting together may defeat the purpose. They can pass the virus on to each other and then bring it home putting their parents ,older or sicker relatives at risk. If there is a play date then it should be a very small number. If children are outside they should maintain a six feet distance from each other.

**Mother’s Day was marked in different  innovative ways across the country. There are other days of celebration like birthdays and anniversaries that will need to be commemorated using social distancing?**

People have come up with great suggestions. Leave a present on the doorstep of an older mother. Have a conversation through the window. Have a meal together in different homes but connect through Facetime. Write a letter, send a card.

**And is there a cardinal piece of advice to follow?**

Wash your hands properly before leaving the house and when you return.

(Source – Irish Independent – News – Eilish O Regan – 22/03/2020)