

## Entrepreneurial spirit leading challenge to meet sanitiser gel demand

By Amy Blaney

As pharmacies and shops in Tuam try to replenish stocks of hand sanitiser, a former student of the town is very much hands-on in manufacturing the much sought-after product.

Aiden Corcoran, who grew up in Kilconly and attended St Jarlath's College in Tuam, is the CEO and owner of cosmetic manufacturing company Cosmetic Creations in Claremorris. This company has set about making its own brand of sanitising gel to meet the demand caused by the Coronavirus.

Aiden's business operates in Claremorris and in Cork and already 40 per cent of the supply of the new product, called Airmedica, is going to the HSE, pharmacies and nursing homes.

Cosmetic Creations manufacture a range of products, including fake tan, for several companies but the hand sanitiser will be the first product in its own name.

Pharmacies in Tuam have had unprecedented demand for sanitising and anti-bacterial products and like similar businesses around the country have been trying to meet continuous requests for gels and face masks.

Pharmacist John Feely of Feely's Pharmacy in Tuam says they are trying to source replacement stock, but it is difficult.

Commercial manager at Cosmetic Creations Patrick Cunney said the increased demand for the product had made the factory busier, but that there are no plans to expand in Claremorris.

"We are making a profit not made before. We are now selling to the HSE and pharmacies, but to increase turnover, the company has invested millions in sourcing raw materials upfront.

"The outbreak of the virus is affecting the company in several ways. It is becoming increasingly difficult to source bottles and components from China because their production is not in full flow. Components are now more expensive; we are looking to buy materials from four countries to feed demand," he said.

John Feely says they are also very busy helping customers who come seeking advice about coronavirus and what precautions to take. He said only certain types of hand sanitising products

are effective.

“A hand sanitiser with a 60-70% alcohol content has a biocidal effect that kills bacteria and viruses on skin. A higher percentage would irritate skin and a lower percentage would not be effective.

“A face mask won’t prevent picking up the disease. Particles in water vapour can move through the mask. The virus can also enter through the eyes and by touching the face. The masks are intended for people working in healthcare and those infected, to limit infection,” explained John.

“The virus is not deadly, but those with immune compromises are at a higher risk. The coronavirus is more virulent than the common cold and symptoms can be severe in patients advanced in years. The majority of people will recover with rest, isolation and paracetamol,” he added.

Meanwhile, daily flights in and out of Ireland West Airport in Knock aren’t being significantly impacted by the coronavirus.

An officer from the HSE is at the airport offering an advisory service and handing out leaflets. The airport is following advice from the HSE and liaising with the HSE officer to report an symptoms of the virus.

“There hasn’t been a drop in the number of people travelling from Knock airport. The coronavirus isn’t making a significant impact here, it’s business as usual,” said Donal Healy, Head of Marketing for Ireland West Airport.

Currently, there are no planned disruptions to flights operating from the airport. During the winter season the airport operates flights to the UK, with flights to Spain beginning in April.

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