

Ethical Vaccines and Covid-19

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The involvement of cell lines derived from aborted babies in the production or testing of vaccines has long been a matter of concern, and pro-life groups and activists have urged both pharmaceutical companies and government to desist from unethical practices in this regard. The Life Institute's position is that the Irish government should be lobbied by all people of good will to make vaccines without any link to abortion available.

On a point of information, vaccines do not contain cells from aborted babies, but the cell lines obtained from babies killed by abortion are used by some companies to grow viruses for vaccine design, production or testing.

The information provided below seeks to provide clarity in relation to Covid-19 vaccines.

The Vaccines currently available

Dr David Prentice is Vice President and Research Director for the Charlotte Lozier Institute, and a leading advocate for ethical research. The Lozier Institute has made accurate information about the development and production of COVID-19 vaccines available, using data from the primary scientific literature when available, along with data from clinical trial documents, reputable vaccine tracking websites, and published commercial information.

The Lozier Institute says it hopes that "by providing accurate data, recipients can make well-informed decisions regarding vaccine choice". Their research examines whether abortion-derived cell lines are used in **a) Design & Development** **b) Production** or **c) Confirmatory Testing** of a vaccine.

In relation to the following vaccines, the findings of the Lozier Institute allows us to present this information :

Developers	Name	Use of cell lines from aborted babies in:		
		Design	Production	Confirmation Testing
Vaccines available in Ireland				
Pfizer-BioNTech	Comirnaty	No	No	In some testing
Moderna	Moderna Covid-19 vaccine	No	No	In some testing
Vaccines coming to market				
Bharat Biotech	Covaxin	No	No	No
BARDA,OWS	AstraZeneca	Yes	Yes	Yes
CureVac	CVnCoV	No	No	No
Novavax	NVX-CoV2373	No	No	In some testing

Fetal cell lines have not been used in the design or production of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines currently available in Ireland, but they have been used in some confirmation testing, according to the Lozier Institute.

The Astra Zeneca vaccine uses cell lines from aborted babies in the design, production and confirmation testing of the vaccine.

Two vaccines coming to market - Covaxin and CvnCoV - are not tainted by any association to cell lines taken from aborted babies.

Further information from the Lozier Institute on other vaccines can be found [Here](#)

Vaccines cannot be mandatory

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – the international body of which the European Court of Human Rights is a part – has passed a resolution that vaccines must not be mandatory and no one should suffer discrimination on account of not having been vaccinated. It reads:

7.3 with respect to ensuring high vaccine uptake:

7.3.1 ensure that citizens are informed that the vaccination is NOT mandatory and that no one is politically, socially, or otherwise pressured to get themselves vaccinated, if they do not wish to do so themselves;

7.3.2 ensure that no one is discriminated against for not having been vaccinated, due to possible health risks or not wanting to be vaccinated;

Similarly, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [says](#): "At the same time, practical reason makes evident that vaccination is not, as a rule, a moral obligation and that, therefore, it must be voluntary."

"In any case, from the ethical point of view, the morality of vaccination depends not only on the duty to protect one's own health, but also on the duty to pursue the common good. In the absence of other means to stop or even prevent the epidemic, the common good may recommend vaccination, especially to protect the weakest and most exposed. Those who, however, for reasons of conscience, refuse vaccines produced with cell lines from aborted fetuses, must do their utmost to avoid, by other prophylactic means and appropriate behavior, becoming vehicles for the transmission of the infectious agent. In particular, they must avoid any risk to the health of those who cannot be vaccinated for medical or other reasons, and who are the most vulnerable.

What does the Pontifical Academy for Life say?

According to the [Pontifical Academy for Life](#), there are three requirements to remember when coming to a decision about whether to take a Covid-19 vaccine that is tainted with a link to cell lines from an aborted baby.

- 1.** Your need to take such a vaccine must be grave, and only done to avoid "significant risk" to your own health or the population as a whole.
- 2.** A more ethical vaccine is not available.
- 3.** You should announce your opposition to any vaccine containing or tested on cell-lines from an aborted baby and, despite taking it, call for an ethical alternative.

Using philosophical principles upheld by the Catholic Church, the pontifical academy explains that a person who meets these three conditions is not guilty of formal or proximate cooperation in the original abortion, having not intended for it to happen, and can licitly receive the inoculation "on a temporary basis".

They do warn however that "on a cultural level, the use of such vaccines contributes in the creation of a generalized social consensus to the operation of the pharmaceutical industries which produce them in an immoral way", thus making our objection to such practices all the more important.

All people of good-will are called to create "pressure so that alternative vaccines are prepared, which are not connected with the abortion of a human foetus, and requesting rigorous legal control of the pharmaceutical industry producers."

Solely offering an unethically tested or produced vaccine represents a form of moral coercion of the conscience by the pharmaceutical industry and health authorities according to the academy, forcing people to act against their conscience or otherwise put their health and that of the population as a whole at risk.

"This is an unjust alternative choice, which must be eliminated as soon as possible," the Pontifical Academy for Life states.

Comment

Joe Walsh [argues](#) that the Bishops need to lead the way in ensuring that ethical vaccines are made available to those who do not want to use vaccines tainted, even if remotely, with the use of cell lines from aborted babies.

Like many others, I was quite shocked to read the statement from the Catholic Bishops' Conference on vaccines for Covid 19. Whilst I'm sure that the statement is theologically correct, there are many possible courses of action which can be theologically correct.

The statement leaves us Catholics on the ground feeling that, not only are we being told that it is permissible to take a vaccine which is not ethically sound, we are in fact being told we would be, in effect, morally negligent and irresponsible if we decide not to take an ethically unsound vaccine.

It feels like we are being 'instructed' to do so by our Bishops. Like many others I have no desire to take a vaccine if it is tainted by the use of fetal cells from aborted babies, especially when ethical alternatives exist.

We are then asked by the Bishops, as Catholics, to continue to advocate for ethically sound vaccines going forward. But I feel the Bishops' statement has itself taken the power of advocacy out of our individual or collective hands

Why would the Pharma industry, or our politicians, be moved to pursue the development of ethically sound vaccines when our own Bishops have already 'instructed' us, their faithful, to avail of the ethically unsound vaccines already in the marketplace or about to be launched ?

Why should they bother? Where will the demand be for such an offering if unethical vaccines are already being accepted? Why go to the expense of billions of Euros of expenditure and commit the resources and the time to develop it and bring it through all the trials and stages and have it accepted by the European EMA if the faithful have been 'instructed' by their Bishops to avail of the vaccines already available.

Many people of faith will be asking their politicians to ensure that the pharmaceuticals provide an ethical vaccine. Our Bishops need to stand with us in that advocacy.

I respectfully ask the Bishops conference, or individual Bishops, to change course here and themselves call on our politicians and on the pharmaceutical industries to provide vaccines which are safe, efficient AND ethically sound.

This approach has already been adopted by Bishop Joseph E. Strickland of the Diocese of Tyler in East Texas.

According to [Dr David Prentice](#), an internationally recognised expert on stem cell research, cell biology and bioethics, one possibility for an ethical vaccine is being produced by CureVac which he says is another mRNA vaccine very similar in production to the ones being offered by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna. "Like those two, the development and production is cell-free, but also no evidence in their publications that any abortion-derived cells were used even in product testing. They are currently in Phase 2/3 trials," he told Life Institute.

The Lozier Institute has [provided](#) a detailed chart compiling accurate information about the development and production of COVID-19 vaccines, which they say will help people make "well-informed decisions regarding vaccine choices" when they have ethical concerns about cell lines being used from aborted babies in any part of said vaccine production.

It may be the case that the Government will need to fall short of the 70% to 80% of the population to be vaccinated to achieve herd immunity, before this matter gets their attention. Only then, when they fall short of reaching that target by perhaps 25% to 30% will the pressure come on the government and the pharmaceutical industry to provide safe, effective and ethically sound vaccines.

But if we do not ask, we shall not receive.