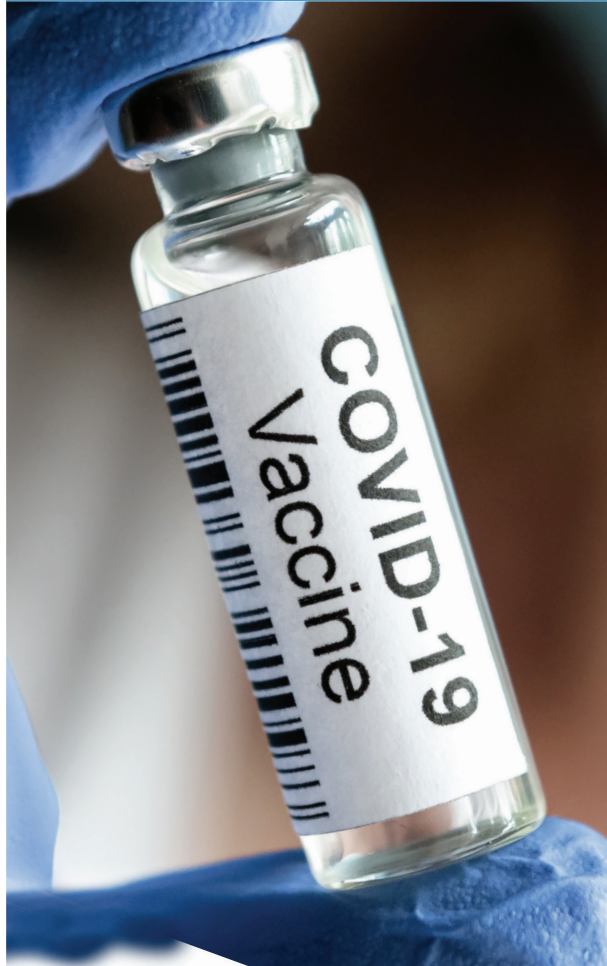


# **COVID-19 VACCINES QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FOR CATHOLICS**



## Q1: Are some vaccines made using cell lines derived from aborted fetuses?

### A: Unfortunately, yes.

Abortion-derived cell-lines are frequently used to develop, manufacture and/or test vaccines. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) explains:

*“Several decades ago, tissue harvested from the bodies of aborted babies was used to create certain cell lines for research purposes.... These abortion-derived cell lines are used as a ‘factory’ to manufacture certain vaccines (e.g., rubella, chickenpox, COVID-19 vaccines, etc.). The cells themselves, however, are not present in the vaccines that patients receive.”<sup>1</sup>*

## Q2: Do COVID-19 vaccines use abortion-derived cell lines?

### A: Yes.

All currently available COVID-19 vaccines use these cell lines, but some are ethically better than others. Moderna and Pfizer COVID vaccines use abortion-derived cell lines during testing only, whereas the Johnson & Johnson vaccine uses them during development, production, and testing. **For this reason, the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are ethically preferable to the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.**

## Q3: MAY Catholics receive vaccines that use abortion-derived cell lines in production or testing?

### A: Yes.

The Church has considered this matter carefully and assures Catholics that: *“...it can be morally acceptable to receive a vaccine that uses abortion-derived cell lines if there are no other available vaccines comparable in safety and efficacy with no connection to abortion.”<sup>1</sup>* Even if ethical alternatives are available, one may receive COVID-19 vaccines that use abortion-derived cell lines, as long as there are serious reasons for doing so.

## Q4: MUST Catholics receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

### A: No.

There are valid reasons why a Catholic may decide to forgo vaccination, including having a serious medical condition, allergy, or concerns related to the vaccine’s link to abortion. The National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) states that:

*“The Catholic Church neither requires nor forbids the use of ethically problematic vaccines, but instead urges people to form their consciences and to carefully discern the moral and prudential issues involved.”<sup>2</sup>*

## Q5: What else should I consider?

### A: The Common Good

Although Catholics are free to choose whether to receive COVID-19 vaccines, the USCCB Committees on Doctrine and on Pro-Life Activities remind Catholics that they must carefully consider the Common Good, a Church teaching that includes respect for each person and

the well-being and stability of a just society. The USCCB affirms that being vaccinated can be “...an act of charity toward the other members of our community.”<sup>3</sup>

However, the Church stresses that unvaccinated persons *“...must avoid any risk to the health of those who cannot be vaccinated for medical or other reasons, and who are the most vulnerable.”<sup>4</sup>*

## Q6: What about vaccine mandates?

**A:** The Church has recently stated that *“...vaccination is not, as a rule, a moral obligation, and that, therefore, it must be voluntary.”<sup>4</sup>*

Both the Catholic Medical Association and The NCBC oppose vaccine mandates as a condition of employment when they do not allow for conscience or religious exemptions.<sup>5,6</sup>

## Q7: What can I do to help end the use of abortion-derived cell lines?

### A: Three Things:

#### 1) When you can, choose the ethically better COVID-19 vaccine.

For example, choose Pfizer or Moderna vaccines over the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. This may encourage vaccine producers to stop using abortion-derived cell lines. If a COVID-19 vaccine becomes available that does not use such cell lines, choose it, when possible.

#### 2) Ask your doctor or pharmacist to offer the ethically better vaccines.

#### 3) Urge vaccine manufacturers and scientists to stop using abortion-derived cell lines altogether.

(See sample letters by searching “Vaccine Letter” at: USCCB.org or CathMed.org)

VACCINE  
IMPACT

COVID-19  
VIRUS

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# COVID-19 VACCINES

## Questions & Answers for Catholics

### Helpful Websites

(search “COVID Vaccine”)

Vatican.va

USCCB.org

NCBCenter.org

CathMed.org

LozierInstitute.org

This information was jointly prepared by  
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### REFERENCES CITED

<sup>1</sup>USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, “Answers to Key Ethical Questions About COVID-19 Vaccines,” 1/21.

<sup>2</sup>The National Catholic Bioethics Center, “Points to Consider on the Use of COVID-19 Vaccines,” 12/8/20.

<sup>3</sup>Chairs for the USCCB Committees on Doctrine and on Pro-Life Activities, “Moral considerations regarding the new COVID-19 vaccines,” 12/11/20.

<sup>4</sup>Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Note on the morality of using some anti-Covid vaccines,” 12/21/20.

<sup>5</sup>Catholic Medical Association, “Catholic Medical Association opposes vaccine mandates without conscience and religious exemptions,” 7/28/21.

<sup>6</sup>The National Catholic Bioethics Center, “NCBC Statement on COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates,” 7/2/21 (Updated 8/23/21).