

## Vaccines prepared from cells derived from aborted human fetuses.

The Pontifical Academy for Life has released an instruction, 'Moral reflections on vaccines prepared from cells derived from aborted human fetuses.' It concerns the production, marketing and use of vaccines grown in commercially available human cell lines that were originally prepared from tissues of two human fetuses who died over 30 years ago in surgical abortions. These include the rubella (German measles) vaccine, the combined MMR vaccine against measles, mumps and rubella, and vaccines against chicken pox and hepatitis-A.

This statement reminds us that even though valuable vaccines have been developed in cell lines from aborted fetal tissue, this good end can never justify the wrongfulness of the two intentional abortions.

Anyone who performs an abortion with the aim of producing vaccines undertakes a gravely immoral act.

Furthermore a person who, knowing the origin of these cells, freely chooses to contribute in some way to the production of these vaccines, participates in the same wrongful act as the person who has performed the abortion.

The statement also points out that it is wrong for a person to produce and market these vaccines because this could encourage the performance of other voluntary abortions with the purpose of producing vaccines. They also commit serious wrongdoing by failing to denounce and publicly reject the original immoral act (the voluntary abortion) and failing to research and promote alternative ways of producing these vaccines.

The Academy urges Catholics and other citizens of upright conscience to use alternate vaccines if these are available or to put pressure on political authorities and health systems so that other vaccines without moral problems become available.

If there are no alternative vaccines which are available and ethically acceptable, it is right to abstain from using these vaccines if it can be done without causing children, and indirectly the population as a whole, to undergo significant risks to their health.

Morally problematic vaccines may, however, be used on a temporary basis if not using them would expose others to considerable dangers to their health. This is particularly true in the case of vaccination against German measles.

The Academy states that "...there remains a moral duty to continue to fight and to employ every lawful means in order to make life difficult for the pharmaceutical industries which act unscrupulously and unethically. However the burden of this important battle cannot and must not fall on innocent children and on the health situation of the population – especially with regard to pregnant women."

The full text of this document can be found at:

[http://www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc\\_view.cfm?recnum=6539](http://www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc_view.cfm?recnum=6539)

The Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales also dealt with this issue in their 2004 document *Cherishing Life*. <http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/cherishinglife/cl37.htm>