

Survey of Religious Ethical Perspectives re COVID-19 Vaccinations

BLUF: In general, Christian (Protestant and Catholic), Muslim and Jewish scholarship and statements support receiving the current Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines.

1. Choosing to receive a COVID-19 vaccination is a personal decision which may involve differing considerations across our population. The intent of this memo is to present some outside perspectives on religious ethical issues related to current COVID-19 vaccines. This is not an endorsement of these positions nor a recommendation, but serves as an attempt to provide material for individual consideration.
2. **Catholic:** U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. In a 11 DEC 2020 memo the Chairmen for the Committee on Doctrine and the Chairman for the Committee on Pro-Life Activities conclude that *“In view of the gravity of the current pandemic and the lack of availability of alternative vaccines, the reasons to accept the new COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna are sufficiently serious to justify their use, despite their remote connection to morally compromised cell lines. In addition, receiving the COVID-19 vaccine ought to be understood as an act of charity toward the other members of our community. In this way, being vaccinated safely against COVID-19 should be considered an act of love of our neighbor and part of our moral responsibility for the common good.”* <https://www.usccb.org/moral-considerations-covid-vaccines>
3. **Protestant Christian:** No one unifying ethical opinion from the Protestant Christian perspective. Concerns relate to pro-life reservations about use of aborted fetal cell lines in vaccine research and production. The *Charlotte Lozier Institute* specializes in accurate and timely research and information on life issues where you can learn more about this. www.lozierinstitute.org Of note, the **two vaccines currently available did not use aborted fetal cell lines in either design or development** (page 8 of chart) although they may have in some level of testing. In the Lozier Institute’s ethical assessment guide both vaccines are ranked as **“Ethically Uncontroversial”**. https://s27589.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/An-Ethics-Assessment-of-COVID-19-Vaccine-Programs-On-Point-46.pdf?hsmi=106400968&hsenc=p2ANqtz--TpgwPxJp3Mdp_DbEUI0B3YgHFWHPtk4b4hgw2ivSfvHD35b2hviIRTxg_p4KMsR9hGT_UvaJhx15RnGbExpXkbsg. Specific to COVID-19 vaccines, the Lozier Institute has provided a chart of the various vaccines as they relate to abortion-derived cell lines. <https://s27589.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/COVID-19-Vaccine-Candidates-and-Abortion-Derived-Cell-Lines.pdf>
4. **Muslim:** The *Muslim American Society* issued a recommendation dated 21 DEC 2020 with the following statement: **“The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines do NOT contain porcine products. They do NOT contain stem cell products or dead fetal remains.** According to the American Muslim Jurists of North America (AMJA): “The COVID-19 vaccines produced by Pfizer and Moderna, which will be soon available, do not rely on such technologies, and thus, there is no reason to doubt their permissibility because of this concern.” <https://www.muslimamericansociety.org/national-muslim-task-force-on-covid-19-and-national-black-muslim-covid-coalition-statement-regarding-covid-19-vaccines>

5. **Jewish:** Ethical considerations from reviewed literature appear to focus more on whether it is ethically acceptable for Jewish individuals to participate in vaccination. In general, the answer is yes. The following two articles are provided for consideration:
<https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/community/articles/jewish-ethics-covid-vaccine>
<https://jewishjournal.com/commentary/analysis/314384/jewish-ethical-questions-around-developing-a-coronavirus-vaccine/>
6. The above is not clearly not exhaustive of all religious groups and positions. Should you have further questions or wish to discuss further please reach out to the Chaplains Office at 703-571-9495 or via email at js.pentagon.dom.list.js-chaplain@mail.mil