



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc
Commissioner

September 21, 2021

Martin F. Scheinman
Scheinman Arbitration & Mediation Services
322 Main Street
Port Washington, NY 11050

Dear Mr. Scheinman,

Some people have expressed concerns about the use of fetal cells in the development and production of the COVID-19 vaccines. This assertion is often based on a misunderstanding of the vaccine development and production processes. **None of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized or approved by the US Food and Drug Administration contain fetal tissue or fetal cells.**

A fetal cell line was used in the development of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine. A fetal cell line is not the same as fetal tissue. Fetal cell lines are grown in a laboratory. The origin of the cell line was from an elective abortion that occurred decades ago. The fetal cells have since multiplied millions of times in the laboratory. It is these new cells that were created in the laboratory that were used to grow the adenovirus used in the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine. Steps are taken to purify the vaccine to make sure none of the cells are included in the final vaccine product. People who are nonetheless concerned with use of a fetal cell line in Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine production can get the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines do not use any fetal cell lines for vaccine production and manufacturing. A fetal cell line (also from an abortion that occurred decades ago) was used early in the research phase of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines to test their safety and efficacy. This is common practice in the development of drugs, from over-the-counter pain medications to prescription treatments, many of which were tested on cells that originated from the same cell line used to test the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Examples of over-the-counter pain medications that have used fetal cell lines include Tylenol, Advil, Aspirin, Aleve, Sudafed, Benadryl, Claritin, Tums, Mucinex, Ex-Lax, and Pepto Bismol. No fetal cells, fetal tissue, or fetal cell lines are used to produce the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.

Finally, while ingredients made from animal byproducts are sometimes used in vaccines for a stabilizing effect, they are not present in any of the three approved COVID-19 vaccines. Moderna and Pfizer have provided a full list of ingredients. The COVID-19 vaccines also do not contain latex or preservatives.

An array of religious groups have stressed the importance of COVID-19 vaccination to save lives from COVID-19 and have called on all people to get vaccinated. As an example, the Catholic Church has issued a clear statement that Roman Catholics can in good faith receive COVID-19 vaccines that use fetal cell lines in development. Vaccination is the most important thing people can do to protect themselves and others from COVID-19.

Additional information on the COVID-19 vaccines are available at nyc.gov/covidvaccine.