

Immunization Against Shingles, Hepatitis A, and Rabies – A Pro-Life Guide

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Introduction

Pharmaceutical companies have developed various vaccines and medicines that utilize fetal cell lines, and research continues to develop similar new products. These products are morally illicit. Because abortion is a policy issue with the federal government, and production of medical products that utilize abortion-derived cell lines is financially lucrative to the abortion industry, we are seeing an increase in these illicit products. A number of illicit vaccines are used to inoculate infants and school-children, and are the subject of other articles on this website.

This article focuses only on the illicit vaccines that have been developed to inoculate against the diseases of shingles, hepatitis A, and rabies. Adults may be faced with the decision whether to be inoculated with these vaccines owing not only to an individual's desire for immunization against disease, but also owing to outside pressures such as employment in certain industries, the military, and the like.

Inoculation with morally illicit vaccines (those that are based on the use of aborted fetal cell lines) constitutes, in fact, cooperation with the intrinsically evil act of abortion. Willful cooperation with evil is morally illicit...unless, in conscience, one believes that he has a proportionately serious reason to do so. If one comes to that conclusion, indirect, remote cooperation may be licit under certain conditions.

Principles of Cooperation with Evil

Choosing to be inoculated with an illicit vaccine is an indirect, remote cooperation with the original abortion that is the source of the substance from which the vaccine was developed or manufactured.

The principles of cooperation with evil have been developed to guide us in our decision-making when we are placed between a rock and a hard place, morally speaking. A detailed explanation of these principles is beyond the scope of this paper, but a very clear and concise explanation of the principles of cooperation with evil can be found on the website of [Ascension Health](#), a Catholic healthcare system. This website provides a library of clear and concise articles related to healthcare ethics, and I highly recommend it.

In brief, under the principles of cooperation with evil, resort to morally illicit vaccines is morally permissible if the following conditions are met:

- The cooperation is indirect and remote from the abortion,
- There is a proportionately serious reason to use the vaccine, and
- The danger of scandal is mitigated

Inoculation against the diseases discussed here is indirect and remote from the original act of the abortion from which the vaccines are derived, but the moral hurdle must be cleared...is it conscionable.

Whether there is a proportionately serious reason to use the vaccine depends on an individual's circumstances. Thus, one should consider not only the adverse effect that the disease may have on oneself, but also the adverse effect that the disease may have on others as well. For example:

- Will potential loss of income or livelihood affect a spouse or dependents?
- Will your care place an unreasonable burden on family or friends?
- Will people suffer in the absence of your care, (a parent, for example)?

This is not an exhaustive listing. It may, however, give one some guidance as to what may constitute a *proportionately serious reason* when considering inoculation with an abortion-related vaccine. Likewise, in balance, one should also consider whether potential side effects of the illicit vaccines militate against their use.

In any case, whenever possible, the use of an alternative ethical immunization is clearly a serious moral duty.

Avoidance of Scandal -

Scandal is so serious a thing that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* addresses it under its coverage of the fifth Commandment. What is scandal? The Catechism defines it thus:

2284 Scandal is an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil. The person who gives scandal becomes his neighbor's tempter. He damages virtue and integrity; he may even draw his brother into spiritual death. Scandal is a grave offense if by deed or omission another is deliberately led into a grave offense.

The reader must be aware that the abortion industry values highly the use of abortive products for vaccines...as it gives a cachet to their activities, to say nothing of the financial incentives.

Therefore, in the event that one concludes that inoculation with an abortion-related vaccine is warranted, there is a serious obligation to take *positive* measures to mitigate scandal. Certainly one is required to *protest the unavailability* of an ethical alternative. In addition, other positive measures should be taken. For example:

- Write your Congress members (even though you may know that he or she is extremely pro-abortion) requesting action to promote the development and production of an ethical alternative.
- Write the manufacturer of the vaccine, requesting that they consider development of an alternative vaccine.
- Make a substantial donation (over and above one's normal contributions) to organizations that promote pro-life issues, education, and products.

The Diseases

A brief description of each of the subject diseases follows. If desired, more detailed information about these diseases can be obtained from a number of internet sources such as the Mayo Clinic, the CDC, MedicineNet.com, and the like. It must be noted, however, that these websites generally promote the use of unethical vaccines, and I

recommend them only for purposes of more detailed information regarding the diseases themselves.

Shingles -

Herpes zoster, commonly known as shingles, develops first as a rash and then progresses to painful blisters. Generally, the shingles blisters clear up in a matter of two to four weeks, but in approximately one in five cases, the pain may continue for a month or more, and, in rare instances, even for life. The pain is the result of chronic nerve irritation called post herpetic neuralgia (PHN). Very little can be done to relieve the pain of PHN; drugs and therapies are generally ineffective. The condition most commonly affects the forehead and chest, and makes it difficult to eat, sleep, and do daily tasks owing to the pain and/or tenderness of the affected area.

If the rash forms on the forehead or head, the disease can cause permanent damage to one's eyesight.

Except through contact with the fluid from the blisters, shingles is not a contagious disease, and normal contact with others is not a concern. The disease can interfere with normal daily activities, however, owing to the tenderness of the blistered area and the neuralgic pain that can linger after the blisters clear up. In some instances the neuralgia can last for many months, and in rare instances, for life.

What Causes Shingles - The disease results from activation of a virus that resides in the patient's nerve cells. This virus is formed and remains in the nerve cell bodies after an attack of chickenpox. Because older adults have had chickenpox as children, they are susceptible to shingles. The shingles virus is more likely to be activated in an older person owing to a weakened immune system. Shingles is contagious to only those persons who are not immune and who may come in direct contact with the discharge from the blisters of a patient. It should be noted, however, that immune persons can contract chickenpox from the discharge, thus destroying their immunity to shingles.

In years past, older people were frequently in contact with children who had chickenpox, thereby building their immunity to shingles. Now, however, nearly all children in the United States are immunized against chickenpox because of the federal government's pressure on the various states mandating the immunization of all children attending day-care centers and schools. These children will therefore not catch chickenpox. Owing to the lack of contact with children who have chickenpox, the incidence of shingles in older adults is rising. Public health officials anticipated this outcome, but after consideration, felt that the trade-off was worthwhile.

Incidence of Shingles - Current estimates put the incidence of shingles among persons older than 60 years at one percent, and the percentage of those cases requiring hospitalization at one to four percent. The overall chances of contracting a case of shingles and requiring hospitalization, therefore, range from 0.01 to 0.04 percent.

Avoiding Shingles - How does one avoid shingles? As mentioned above, contact with children who are infected with chickenpox is a positive factor, but that is less likely to occur today owing to the governmental immunization program, dispersion of the family, and the dearth of children in our modern society. Because the immune system is a key factor, one should take steps to strengthen it through healthy eating habits that include fresh fruits and vegetables, vitamin supplements, and reasonable exercise. Another major factor is psychological stress, such as the death of a loved one. Financial worries, concern for adult children, and the like are also stress factors. (Paradoxically, the more one worries about contracting shingles, the more likely it is that the virus will be activated.)

Immunization – ZOSTAVAX is the only vaccine that is available for inoculation. This vaccine is, however, derived from aborted fetal cells. Thus, it is an unethical, or illicit, vaccine. Vaccination with ZOSTAVAX will not protect everyone. Studies indicate that the vaccine has an estimated efficacy rate of about 50 percent... ranging from 64 percent for persons 60-69 years of age, to 41 percent for

persons 70-79 years of age. The vaccine, when effective, reportedly can provide immunity for up to four years. Further, the CDC currently (March, 2013) states on its website that, “Studies are ongoing to assess the duration of protection from one dose of zoster vaccine and the need, if any, for booster doses.”

It is easy to be vaccinated for shingles... no prescription is needed, and one only needs to go to a pharmacy. Unfortunately, one will usually not see the vaccine's package insert. The vaccine can have side effects, some of them serious, and people having certain medical conditions are advised to avoid inoculation. Further, the vaccine virus can be transmitted to others, so contact with newborn infants, pregnant women who are not immune to chickenpox, and persons with weakened immune systems should be avoided. Read the *Highlights of Prescribing Information* for [ZOSTAVAX](#). It describes the contraindications and the potential side effects of the vaccine.

Hepatitis A -

The hepatitis A virus is highly contagious. Even persons who are immune to hepatitis A can be carriers of the disease. The disease inflames the liver and affects its ability to function. Infected persons often have yellowing of the skin and eyes, muscle pain, low-grade fever, dark urine, and experience fatigue, nausea, abdominal pain, and loss of appetite. Typically symptoms do not appear for the first few weeks...and some infected individuals have no symptoms at all. Symptoms generally last for about two months, but can last as long as six months. The duration of the disease does not increase the seriousness, however.

In rare cases, a loss of liver function may occur, requiring hospitalization. People with chronic liver diseases and older adults are more at risk in this regard.

What Causes the Disease – The major cause of Hepatitis A is poor hygiene. Because it is highly contagious, it can also be contracted through contact with others who have, or carry, the disease. Ingestion of small amounts of contaminated fecal matter is the usual means of transmission. Thus it can be transmitted by someone who handles the food you eat. This is especially of

concern when eating in areas where the inhabitants fail to wash their hands properly. Other causes include drinking contaminated water, eating raw shellfish taken from contaminated water, sexual contact, and needle sharing. Also persons employed in certain occupations, such as sanitation workers, health-care workers, and the like, are at greater risk.

Persons who have had hepatitis A are immune...it can be contracted only once. Those who are immune, whether by previous contraction of the disease or through inoculation, can still carry the disease however. Good personal hygiene is a major deterrent to transmission of hepatitis A.

Incidence of Hepatitis A - The disease is reportedly decreasing (according to the Center for Disease Control) owing to the government's requirement that children be inoculated. Perhaps the incidence of the disease is waning because so many persons have been inoculated...not because of improvement in hygiene. Notwithstanding the apparent decrease in incidences of hepatitis A, the number of carriers (who are themselves immune) may have actually increased.

Avoiding Hepatitis A - As noted above, the disease is best avoided by good personal hygiene, avoiding certain sexual practices, and avoiding contact with persons who practice poor hygiene. This disease reinforces the adage: *Cleanliness is next to Godliness.*

Immunization - One can be inoculated against hepatitis A through the use of vaccines or Immune Globulin (IG). Both of the vaccines that are available (*HAVRIX* and *VAQTA*) are made from aborted fetal cells, and therefore should be avoided on moral grounds. Fortunately, Immune Globulin is an ethical alternative that is available.

The manufacturers of both vaccines warn that care should be taken in the vaccination of pregnant women and nursing mothers, as the effect that the vaccine may have on developing or nursing infants *has not been determined*. Also, both vaccines have reported serious post-marketing experience described in the respective package inserts. Although the number of reported cases is not

known, one is advised to study the information provided by the companies that manufacture the vaccines. See the *Highlights of Prescribing Information* for [HAVRIX](#) and for [VAQTA](#) that describe the contraindications and the potential side effects of the vaccines.

Immunization reportedly lasts for at least eight years, but a 2012 report by *PubMed Health*, a service of the National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health states that the vaccines give protection ranging from two to five years.

As stated above, use of these illicit vaccines is not the only option for immunization from hepatitis A. There is also an alternative *licit* treatment for the disease in the form of Immune Globulin shots. Immune Globulin can provide pre-exposure immunity for about three months, and if administered *within two weeks of exposure* will prevent infection, similar to the vaccines. Unlike the vaccines, Immune Globulin is known to be safe for pregnant women and nursing mothers.

Pre-exposure shots of IG should be considered if one plans to travel to a high-risk country or region.

Other than shots, if one contracts hepatitis A, doctors recommend rest, adequate nutrition, and fluids. Check with your doctor whether current prescriptions, vitamin supplements, or over-the-counter drugs (which may damage the liver) should be curtailed. Alcoholic beverages should also be avoided.

Rabies -

Rabies is a deadly virus transmitted from the saliva of rabid animals, usually through bites. The virus can also be transmitted if the animal happens to lick a break in the skin of the victim. Owing to the high degree of care given domesticated animals in the United States, and the availability of vaccine, the disease is rare. It is more common in developing countries where stray dogs are more numerous.

Avoiding Rabies - Persons who treat or handle with animals should maintain pre-exposure immunity. Others should be careful with wild animals. Generally a wild animal, such as a raccoon, that is not wary of humans should be avoided, as it is probably rabid. In the United States, bats, although rarely handled, are a common source of the virus. Bats can bite sleeping persons without waking them. For this reason, if one finds a bat in the room of a sleeping person or an infant, it is prudent to seek medical attention. The symptoms of rabies are not manifest immediately... It usually takes a period of several weeks. Once the symptoms appear, however, the disease is usually fatal.

In addition to wild animals, rabies can be transmitted by domesticated animals such as cats, dogs, rabbits, goats, horses, and cattle. If bitten, one should isolate the animal to determine that it is not rabid. If that cannot be done, immunization is required.

Immunization - Rabies immunization requires a series of shots of vaccine and Rabies Immune Globulin. The latter is not abortion-related, but the vaccine may be. There are two vaccines available: *RabAvert* (Novartis) and *Imovax* (Sanofi Pasteur). The *Imovax* vaccine is abortion-related, and therefore, there is a grave responsibility to require the use of the *RabAvert* vaccine.

Summary

Whether to use an unethical vaccine, one must consider the seriousness of the harm to be avoided, as well as the potential effectiveness and side effects of the vaccine. Where an alternative, ethical, vaccine or immunization exists, one has a serious moral obligation to use that alternative. Ethical alternatives are available for immunization against both hepatitis A and rabies.

Older people are more susceptible to contracting shingles. The disease can be painful and in some instances, debilitating, but it is generally not contagious.

ZOSTAVAX, an unethical vaccine, is the sole vaccine that is available for immunization against shingles. Having an efficacy rate in the range of about 50 percent, it is not a *silver bullet*. Additionally, the vaccine can have serious side effects that may offset the benefit of its potential efficacy.

Hepatitis A is highly contagious, but it is rarely life-threatening, and can be contracted only once. Two vaccines are available, but they are both morally illicit. Injections of Immune Globulin are the morally acceptable alternative and should always be preferred.

Rabies is virtually always fatal, and vaccination is required. There are two vaccines available. One of these, *RabAvert*, is morally licit. The other is derived from an aborted fetal cell line. There is a grave responsibility to use the *RavAvert* vaccine whenever rabies immunization is required.

A convenient summary of these diseases and their treatment options is shown in Table 1.

Disease	Immunization treatment is ethical	Immunization Options	
		Pre-Exposure	Post-Exposure
Shingles	No	ZOSTAVAX (Merk) * About 50% effective. * Potential harmful side effects. * Vaccinated persons should avoid contact with infants and expectant mothers.	None
	Yes	None	None
Hepatitis A	No	VAQTA (Merk); HAVRIX (Glaxo SmithKline) * Potential side effects; seizures (very rare) * Provides 2-8 years immunity.	VATQA (Merk); HAVRIX (Glaxo SmithKline) * Potential side effects; seizures (very rare) * Must be administered within two weeks of exposure. * Provides 2-8 years immunity.
	Yes	Immune Globulin * Provides about 3 months immunity.	Immune Globulin * Must be administered within two weeks of exposure. * Provides about 3 months immunity.
Rabies	No	IMOVAX (Sanofi Pasteur) * Immunity period is finite; booster doses are required.	IMOVAX (Sanofi Pasteur) * See your doctor immediately; once symptoms are manifest, death is likely to occur.
	Yes	RabAvert (Novartis, formerly Chiron) * Immunity period is finite; booster doses are required.	RabAvert (Novartis, formerly Chiron) * See your family doctor immediately; once symptoms are manifest, death is likely to occur.

Table 1 – The Diseases and their Immunization Options

Don Henz writes from his home in Cleves, Ohio where he is retired. He and his wife, Helen, have been married for more than 50 years. They have 6 children and 14 grandchildren.