

## Official Islamic Medical Association Of South Africa (Imasa) Stance On Vaccination

Disease prevention is one of the goals of public health and vaccination is an important component that assists in the facilitation of this goal. Undoubtedly, vaccines protect both people who receive them and those with whom they come into contact. Muslims should note that through global vaccination initiatives many infectious diseases such as polio, measles, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), rubella (German measles), diphtheria, mumps and tetanus, that were once common in the different countries of the world, have finally been brought under control and in many developed countries virtually eliminated. Muslims should therefore take cognisance of the fact that over the years, vaccines have succeeded in preventing countless cases of infectious diseases and their complications resulting in reduction of disabilities and literally millions of lives saved!

IMASA is well aware that the Glorious Qur'an forbids Muslims from consuming pork (Al-An`ām, 6:145) and in view of this particular ayah, Muslims in general are uncomfortable when they come to learn that porcine elements are used in the manufacturing process of certain vaccines. However, it is important for Muslims to take note of the fact that as far back as 1995 more than 100 Muslim legal scholars participated in a Seminar convened in Kuwait by the Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences on the topic: "The Judicially Prohibited and Impure Substances in Foodstuffs and Drugs." At the conclusion of this Seminar the consensus arrived at was: "transformation of port products into gelatin alters them sufficiently to make it permissible for observant Muslims to receive vaccines containing pork gelatin".

IMASA further wishes to draw the attention of the general Muslims to the Objectives of Islamic Law that are termed as Maqâsid al-Sharī`ah which are:

1. Preservation of Religion (ḥifẓ al-dīn).
2. Preservation of life ((ḥifẓ al-nafs).
3. Preservation of progeny ((ḥifẓ al-nasl).
4. Preservation of intellect ((ḥifẓ al-`aql).
5. Preservation of wealth (ḥifẓ al-mâl).

Interestingly, vaccination fulfils all of the above five objectives of the Sharī`ah:

Firstly, insofar as preservation of the Religion is concerned, Muslims who are vaccinated against vaccine-preventable diseases will be in a better position to uphold and practice all the farâ'id (obligatory acts of worship) of Islam.

Secondly, vaccination initiatives by facilitating universal access of safe vaccines have succeeded in the preservation of the lives of millions of people across the globe, thereby reducing global morbidity and mortality.

Thirdly, Parent who opt to have their children vaccinated would have fulfilled the preservation of their progeny by safeguarding them from succumbing to the vaccine preventable diseases.

Fourthly, preservation of intellect/sanity is achieved through vaccination in that those who implement the vaccination initiatives in their community and country at large will enjoy peace of mind knowing that their community and citizens have been protected from contracting the vaccine-preventable diseases.

Fifthly, vaccination actually contributes the preservation of wealth. It is an extremely cost-effective intervention and makes good economic sense in that it is always better to prevent a disease than to treat it and its resultant complications.

Finally, IMASA endorses vaccination of Muslim children because the overall benefit of vaccination at the individual level is to strengthen their immunity and to protect their bodies from fatal diseases whilst at the community level it leads to healthy, productive and useful members of society.