

## Information Regarding Vaccination of Children

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires age appropriate immunizations for enrollment in private and public schools as well as child day care. The *Code of Virginia* permits documented medical exemptions from vaccines on a temporary and permanent basis. In Virginia, there is no legal provision for a philosophical exemption to vaccines.

The National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) provides guidance regarding bioethical issues from a Catholic perspective. If parents have questions regarding the ethical use of vaccines, the NCBC website explains the Church's teaching on this issue and other related topics. If you go to [www.NCBCcenter.org](http://www.NCBCcenter.org), under the tab labeled "Resources," you will find a link called: Frequently Asked Questions. Click on it, and it will take you to a series of topics. Scroll down to "FAQ on the Use of Vaccines." There, you will find answers to a list of relevant questions, including the position of the Catholic Church regarding this topic. For example, here is one excerpt:

### **Am I free to refuse to vaccinate myself or my children on the grounds of conscience?**

One must follow a certain conscience even if it errs, but there is a responsibility to inform one's conscience properly. There would seem to be no proper grounds for refusing immunization against dangerous contagious disease, for example, rubella, especially in light of the concern that we should all have for the health of our children, public health, and the common good (NCBC, 2014).

## Resources about Vaccination for Parents

Immunization Action Coalition. (2012). *After the shots... what to do if your child has discomfort*. Retrieved from <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4015.pdf>

Immunization Action Coalition. (nd). *Vaccine-preventable disease photos*. Retrieved from <http://www.vaccineinformation.org/photos/>

National Catholic Bioethics Center. (2006). *Frequently asked questions - FAQ on the use of vaccines*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbcenter.org/page.aspx?pid=1284>

National Network for Immunization Information. (2010). *Evaluating information about vaccines on the Internet*. Retrieved from <http://www.immunizationinfo.org/issues/general/evaluating-information-about-vaccines-internet>

National Network for Immunization Information. (2009). *Vaccine misinformation*. Retrieved from <http://www.immunizationinfo.org/issues/general/vaccine-misinformation>

Pacholczyk, T. (2005). *The morality of vaccinating our children*. National Catholic Bioethics Center. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbcenter.org/page.aspx?pid=251>

Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society. (2011). A statement regarding personal belief exemption from immunization mandates

Sgreccia, E. (2005). *Statement from Pontifical Academy for Life*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbcenter.org/page.aspx?pid=1284>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. (2009). *Ethical and religious directives for Catholic health care services*. Retrieved from <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/health-care/upload/Ethical-Religious-Directives-Catholic-Health-Care-Services-fifth-edition-2009.pdf>

Virginia Department of Health. (2014). *School and day care minimum immunization requirements*. Retrieved from <http://www.vdh.state.va.us/epidemiology/immunization/requirements.htm>