



# Update: COVID-19 Vaccine Candidates and **Abortion-Derived Cell Lines**

David Prentice, Ph.D. | September 30, 2020.

To view this chart as a PDF, see: [COVID-19 Vaccine Candidates and Abortion-Derived Cell Lines](#)

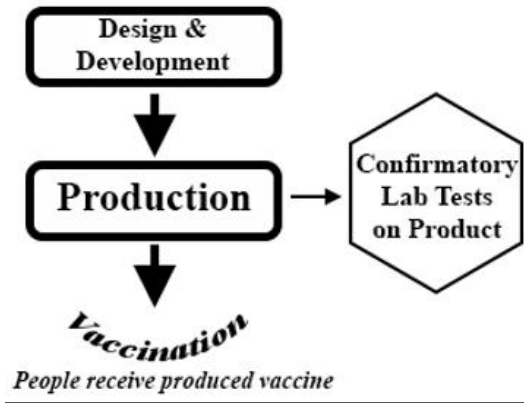
**Updated November 11, 2020**

Accurate information about the development and production of COVID-19 vaccines is essential, especially because many proposed candidates use newer molecular technologies for production of a viral vaccine. One concern regarding the ethical assessment of viral vaccine candidates is the potential use of abortion-derived cell lines in the development, production or testing of a vaccine. This analysis utilizes data from the primary scientific literature when available, along with data from clinical trial documents, reputable vaccine tracking websites, and published commercial information.<sup>1</sup> It is the hope that by providing accurate data, recipients can make well-informed decisions regarding vaccine choices.

**For additional background and guidance, please see:**

- \* [A Visual Aid to Viral Infection and Vaccine Production](#) for a visual primer on the various strategies for viral vaccine production.
- \* [COVID-19 Vaccines & Fetal Cell Lines](#) for an infographic description of how fetal cell lines are sometimes used to produce vaccines.

**Flow Chart for Creation and Testing of Vaccines**
















Design & Development: conceptualization, preparatory experiments, and specification for how vaccine will be constructed and produced.










Production: process used to manufacture final vaccine to be given to people.










Confirmatory Lab Tests on Product: tests to analyze quality, nucleic acid or protein sequence, protein conformation, antibody reactivity, etc. of final vaccine product.
















Vaccination: giving final produced vaccine to people.













<p><b>Analysis of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Vaccine Candidates</b></p> <p>Last Updated 10 November 2020</p>					DOES NOT USE abortion-derived cell line		
					DOES USE abortion-derived cell line		
					SOME tests DO NOT use abortion-derived cells, SOME DO.		
					[BLANK] Currently undetermined		
Sponsor(s) <sup>1</sup>	Country	Strategy <sup>2</sup>	Clinical Trial Status <sup>3</sup>	Public Funding <sup>4</sup>	Design & Development	Production	Confirm-atory Lab Tests
<b>WHOLE VIRUS VACCINE – LIVE ATTENUATED or INACTIVATED</b>							











Beijing Institute of Biological Products/ Sinopharm	China	Inactivated virus “BBIBP-CorV” Given: Intramuscular	Phase 3 Phase 1/2		 Vero monkey cells	 Vero monkey cells	
Wuhan Institute of Biological Products/ Sinopharm	China	Inactivated virus Unnamed Given: Intramuscular	Phase 3 Phase 1/2		 Vero monkey cells	 Vero monkey cells Xia et al., JAMA 324, 951, 13Aug2020	
John Paul II Medical Research Institute	USA	Live attenuated virus	Pre-clinical		 Ethical cell lines as a matter of policy	 Perinatal human cells (term umbilical cord and placental)	
Sinovac Biotech Co., Ltd.	China	Inactivated virus “PiCoVacc” Given: Intramuscular	Phase 3 Phase 3 Phase 1/2 Phase 1/2 Phase 1/2		 Vero monkey cells	 Vero monkey cells Gao et al., Science 369, 77, 3July2020	  protein test <b>HEK293 cells</b> Supplement Gao et al., Science 369, 77, 3July2020
<b>VIRAL VECTOR-BASED VACCINE</b>							
Altimune	USA	Replication-deficient Adenovirus vector “AdCOVID”	Pre-clinical		 <b>PER.C6 cells</b>	 <b>PER.C6 cells</b>	

		Given: Intranasal				Same platform as NasoVAX NasoVAX uses PER.C6 Licensed PER.C6 from Janssen	
AstraZeneca University of Oxford	USA UK	Replication-deficient Adenovirus vector “AZD1222” “ChAdOX1nCoV-19” Given: Intramuscular	Phase 3 Phase 3 Phase 3 Phase 2/3 Phase 2/3 Phase 1/2 Phase 1/2	Operation Warp Speed HHS-BARD A \$1.2 Billion CEPI up to \$384 Million	 HEK293 cells	 HEK293 cells van Doremalen et al., Nature preprint, 30July2020	
CanSino Biologics, Inc. Beijing Institute of Biotechnology, Academy of Military Medical Sciences, PLA of China	China	Replication-deficient Adenovirus vector “Ad5-nCoV” Given: Intramuscular	Phase 3 Phase 3 Phase 2 Phase 2 Phase 2 Phase 1 Phase 1		 HEK293 cells	 HEK293 cells Biospace, 12May2020	
Gamaleya Research Institute	Russia	Replication-deficient Adenovirus vectors (rAd26-S+rAd5-S) “Sputnik V” Given: Intramuscular	Phase 3 Early approval in Russia August		 HEK293 cells	 HEK293 cells	




			2020 Phase 1/2 Phase 1/2				
Institut Pasteur and Themis and Merck	USA France	Replication-competent recombinant measles virus “TMV-083” Given: Intramuscular	Phase 1	CEPI up to \$4.9 Million		 Vero monkey cells	
Janssen Research & Development, Inc. Johnson & Johnson	USA	Replication-deficient Adenovirus vector “Ad26” Given: Intramuscular	Phase 3 Phase 1/2	Operation Warp Speed HHS-BARD A \$1,457,887,081 total	 	  Tostanoski et al., Nature Medicine, 3Sept2020; J&J, 30March2020; Janssen Vaccine Technologies	
Merck and IAVI	USA	Replication-competent recombinant vesicular stomatitis virus (VSVΔG) “V590” Given: Intramuscular	Pre-clinical	Operation Warp Speed HHS-BARD A \$38,033,570	 Vero monkey cells	 Vero monkey cells Use rVSV Ervebo platform Ervebo uses Vero cell culture-11 Description	
Shenzhen Geno-immune Medical Institute	China	Lentivirus minigenes + Adult human APC (antigen-presenting cells)	Phase 1				











Shenzhen Geno-immune Medical Institute	China	Lentivirus minigenes + Adult human CD/T cells (dendritic cells and T cells) “LV-SMENP-DC”	Phase 1/2				
Vaxart	USA	Replication-deficient Adenovirus vector “VXA-CoV2-1” plus dsRNA adjuvant Given: Oral	Phase 1		  HEK293 cells	  HEK293 cells Moore et al., bioRxiv 6Sept2020	
<b>PROTEIN-BASED VACCINE</b>							
Anhui Zhifei Longcom Biopharmaceutical/Institute of Microbiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences	China	Protein vaccine Recombinant RBD dimer plus adjuvant Given: Intramuscular	Phase 2 Phase 1/2 Phase 1		  HEK293T cells Dai et al., Cell 6Aug2020	 CHO hamster cells Dai et al., Cell 6Aug2020	 Pseudovirus  HEK293T cells Dai et al., Cell 6Aug2020
Clover Biopharmaceuticals, Inc.	China	Protein vaccine “SCB-2019” plus adjuvant CpG 1018 Given: Intramuscular	Phase 1	CEPI up to \$69.5 Million		 CHO hamster cells Trimer-Tag system; Liu et al., Scientific Reports 2017	
John Paul II Medical Research Institute	USA	Recombinant Protein Perinatal human cells (term umbilical cord and	Pre-clinical		 Ethical cell lines	 Perinatal human cells	








		placental)			as a matter of policy	(term umbilical cord and placental)	
Medicago	Canada	Protein on Virus-Like Particle “CoVLP” Plant-expressed spike protein particle with adjuvant, CpG1018 or AS03 Given: Intramuscular	Phase 1		 Recombinant DNA sequence in Agrobacterium, transformation of plant cells	 Plant expression of protein and VLP Ward et al., medRxiv 6Nov2020	  Pseudovirus HEK293 cells Ward et al., medRxiv 6Nov2020
Novavax	USA	Protein vaccine “NVX-CoV2373” Baculovirus expression plus Matrix M adjuvant Given: Intramuscular	Phase 3 Phase 2 Phase 1	Operation Warp Speed HHS-BARD A \$1,600,434,523 CEPI up to \$388 Million		 Sf9 insect cells Bangaru et al., bioRxiv preprint, 6Aug2020; Graphical view	  Pseudovirus HEK293 cells Bangaru et al., bioRxiv preprint, 6Aug2020
Sanofi and GSK Protein Sciences	USA France	Protein vaccine Baculovirus expression plus AS03 adjuvant Given: Intramuscular	Phase 1/2	Operation Warp Speed HHS-BARD A \$2,072,775,336 total		 Sf9 insect cells Baculovirus expressed recombinant protein ;	
Sorrento	USA	Protein vaccine “T-VIVA-19”	Pre-clinical				

		SARS-Cov-2 spike protein S1 domain fused with human IgG-Fc Given: Intramuscular				CHO cells Herrmann et al., bioRxiv preprint, 30June2020	
Sorrento	USA	Protein vaccine “STI-6991” SARS-Cov-2 spike protein expressed on K562 cells	Pre-clinical			 K562 cells Concept: Ji et al., Medicine in Drug Discovery March2020	
University of Pittsburgh	USA	Protein vaccine Adenovirus-expressed recombinant proteins “PittCoVacc” Given: Microneedle arrays	Pre-clinical		  HEK293 cells	  HEK293 cells Kim et al., EBioMedicine , 2April2020	
University of Queensland and CSL Ltd.	Australia	Protein vaccine “V451” Recombinant protein with proprietary molecular clamp Given: Intramuscular	Phase 1 Phase 1 Phase 1	CEPI up to \$4.5 Million		 expiCHO hamster cells	
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<b>RNA VACCINE</b>							
Arcturus Therapeutics	USA	mRNA vaccine self-transcribing, replicating	Phase 1/2		 Sequence	 No cells used	  protein test



		<p>“LUNAR-CoV19”        (“ARCT-021”)        in vitro transcription        reaction with T7 RNA        polymerase from STARR        plasmid template        LUNAR proprietary lipid        nanoparticle        encapsulated        Given: Intramuscular</p>			designed on computer	de Alwis et al., bioRxiv 3Sept2020	de Alwis et al., bioRxiv 3Sept2020
CureVac	Germany	<p>mRNA vaccine        non-replicating        “CVnCoV”        in vitro transcription        lipid nanoparticle        encapsulated        Given: Intramuscular</p>	Phase 2 Phase 1	CEPI up to \$15.3 Million	 Sequence designed on computer	 No cells used Rauch et al., bioRxiv 23Oct20 20	 Protein test Reticulocyte lysate, HeLa cells Rauch et al., bioRxiv 23Oct20 20

<p>Moderna, Inc. with National Institutes of Health</p>	<p>USA</p>	<p>mRNA vaccine non-replicating “mRNA-1273” T7 RNA polymerase-mediated transcription from DNA plasmid template LNP (lipid nanoparticle) encapsulated Given: Intramuscular</p>	<p>Phase 3 Phase 2 Phase 1</p>	<p>Operation Warp Speed HHS-BARD A \$2,479,894,979 total CEPI up to \$1 Million</p>	<p> Sequence designed on computer</p>	<p> No cells used <a href="#">Corbett et al., Nature , 5Aug2020</a></p>	<p>  protein test &amp; pseudovirus <b>HEK293 cells</b> <a href="#">Corbett et al., Nature , 5Aug2020</a></p>
<p>Pfizer and BioNTech</p>	<p>USA German y</p>	<p>mRNA vaccine non-replicating “BNT-162a1,b1,b2,b3,c2 ” nucleoside-modified mRNA in vitro transcribed by T7 polymerase from a plasmid DNA template LNP (lipid nanoparticle) encapsulated Given: Intramuscular</p>	<p>Phase 2/3 Phase 1/2 Phase 1/2 Phase 1 Phase 1</p>	<p>Operation Warp Speed HHS-BARD A \$1.95 Billion</p>	<p> Sequence designed on computer</p>	<p> No cells used <a href="#">Vogel et al., bioRxiv 8Sept2020</a></p>	<p>  protein test &amp; pseudovirus <b>HEK293 cells</b> <a href="#">Vogel et al., bioRxiv 8Sept2020</a></p>
<p>Sanofi Pasteur and Translate Bio</p>	<p>USA France</p>	<p>mRNA vaccine non-replicating “MRT5500” synthesized by in vitro</p>	<p>Pre-clinic al</p>		<p> Sequence designed on computer</p>	<p> No cells used <a href="#">Kalnin et al., bioRxiv 14Oct2020</a></p>	<p>  protein test &amp; pseudovirus <b>HEK293 cells</b></p>

		transcription employing RNA polymerase with a plasmid DNA template LNP (lipid nanoparticle) encapsulated Given: Intramuscular				mRNA production in the lab ; Translate Bio scientific platform	Kalnin et al., bioRxiv 14Oct2020
<b>DNA VACCINE</b>							
Genexine	Korea	DNA vaccine “GX-19” DNA synthesized in vitro, placed in plasmid vector Given: Intramuscular and Electroporation	Phase 1/2		 Sequence designed on computer	 No cells used Seo et al., bioRxiv 10Oct2020	
Inovio Pharmaceuticals	USA	DNA vaccine “INO-4800” DNA synthesized in vitro, placed in plasmid vector Given: Intradermal Electroporation	Phase 1/2 Phase 1	Operation Warp Speed CEPI up to \$22.5 Million	 Sequence designed on computer	 No cells used Smith et al., Nature 20May2020	  protein test & pseudovirus <b>HEK293 cells</b> Smith et al., Nature 20May2020
Symvivo Corporation	Canada	DNA vaccine Genetically engineered Bifidobacteri	Phase 1			 No cells used	

		um longum “bacTRL-spike” Given: Oral, bacteria bind to gut lining					
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1. Data accumulated from primary literature as referenced in the Chart; AND “COVID-19 Treatment and Vaccine Tracker,” Milken Institute, <https://covid-19tracker.milkeninstitute.org/> ; AND “Draft landscape of COVID-19 candidate vaccines,” World Health Organization (WHO), <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/draft-landscape-of-covid-19-candidate-vaccines>  
NOTE that patents are not considered because they are unreliable sources; even the most relevant patents are prospective documents that provide examples of potential use, but do not provide information about actual, current application of an invention or technology.
2. Prentice, DA and Sander Lee, T. June 15, 2020. A Visual Aid to Viral Infection and Vaccine Production. On Science Series 1. Accessed 19 June 2020 at: <https://lozierinstitute.org/a-visual-aid-to-viral-infection-and-vaccine-production/>
3. Phases of Clinical Trials: Pre-clinical- laboratory and animal studies; Phase I- 10-100 people, study safety and dosage; Phase II- tens to hundreds of people, study efficacy, dosage, side effects; Phase III- hundreds to thousands of people, study efficacy and adverse reactions.
4. HHS-BARDA = U.S. Health and Human Services-Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority; CEPI = Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations; BARDA’s rapidly-expanding COVID-19 medical countermeasure portfolio. Accessed 29 Sept 2020 at <https://www.medicalcountermeasures.gov/app/barda/coronavirus/COVID19.aspx>; CEPI’s COVID-19 Vaccine Portfolio, Accessed 29 Sept 2020 at <https://cepi.net/COVAX/>

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# More Research on the Vaccine Terms

By The Audio Key Team

November 19 2020

## Where do MRC 5 cells come from?

**The MRC-5 cell line was developed** in September 1966 **from lung tissue taken from a 14 week fetus aborted** for psychiatric reason from a 27 year old physically healthy woman. The cell morphology is fibroblast-like. The karyotype is 46,XY; normal diploid male. (Courtesy of [https://web.expasy.org/cellosaurus/CVCL\\_G704](https://web.expasy.org/cellosaurus/CVCL_G704))

## Origins of the HEK293 Cell Line

**HEK293 is a cell line derived from human embryonic kidney cells** grown in tissue culture. They are also known, more informally, as HEK cells. This particular line was initiated by the transformation and culturing of normal HEK cells with sheared adenovirus 5 DNA. The transformation resulted in the incorporation of approximately 4.5 kilobases from the viral genome into human chromosome 19 of the HEK cells. The line was cultured by scientist Alex Van der Eb in the early 1970s at his lab at the University of Leiden, Holland. The transformation was executed by Frank Graham, another scientist Van der Eb's lab who invented the calcium phosphate method for transfecting cells. **The source of the cells was a healthy aborted fetus of unknown parenthood. The name HEK293 is thusly named because it was Frank Graham's 293rd experiment.**

(Courtesy of <https://www.hek293.com/>)