

Human fetal cell lines

Used in childhood vaccine research, development & production

July 2024

Aborted fetal cells are used in vaccine research and development to “grow” viruses to manufacture vaccines. When vaccine research began, that host was animal tissue. But that can be highly problematic if the virus won’t grow. There can also be unknown contaminants, as the world learned when SV-40 was found in the polio vaccines.

Fetal cell lines are considered the “gold standard” for pharmaceutical development. (Note that fetal cell lines are not exclusive to the vaccine industry; other drugs, such as Regeneron’s antibody treatment for COVID-19, also use fetal cells.)

Here are the fetal cell lines currently being used in the childhood vaccine schedule.

Name	Stands for	Researcher	Source	Age	Abortion reason	Year	Other	Current uses
RA 27/3	Rubella Attenuated, 27th fetus, 3rd tissue removed	Stanley Plotkin, Wistar Institute, Philadelphia, PA	Fetal kidney	Est. 9 weeks	Rubella infection during early pregnancy	1964	25-year-old mother	Rubella
WI-38	Wistar Institute-38th fetus.	Leonard Hayflick	Female fetal lung	Approx. 3 months	Legal abortion in Sweden. Married parents, healthy pregnancy, father alcoholic, so mom did not want more kids.	1962	Mom did not consent, nor have knowledge of the use. Hayflick widely shared these cells around the world.	Rubella
MRC-5	Medical Research Center (UK)	J.P. Jacobs	Male fetal lung	14 weeks	“Psychiatric reasons”	1966	27-year-old healthy mom	Varicella, Hepatitis A, MMR
HEK-293	Human embryonic kidney cells, 293rd experiment (Netherlands)	Frank Graham, in Alex Van der Eb’s lab	Fetal kidney	unknown	Unknown (records lost and scientist doesn’t recall). Legal “therapeutic abortion” likely due to illegality of abortion, health of fetal cells, and doctor’s typical practices.	Cells obtained 1972, cell line made 1973	Note 293rd experiment does not equal 293 fetuses. Baby was healthy. One of the most used cell lines in the world.	COVID (production of AZ; R&D for Pfizer, Moderna)
PER.C6	Peripheral eye retina, Crucell (biotech developer), 6th clone.	Ron Bout and Frits Fallsux in Alex Van der Eb’s lab	Fetal retina	18 weeks	“Socially indicated” for “unknown father.” Healthy baby, psychologically “normal” mother.	Cells frozen 1985, cell line made 1995.	Van der Eb told the FDA, “There was permission, et cetera.” Used widely in gene therapy. Adenovirus transformed the fetal retinal cells.	COVID (Janssen)