

COVID Conscious, Living Wisely!

Peter N. Landless., M.B., B.Ch., M.Med.,
FCP(SA), FACC, FASNC
Director, Adventist Health Ministries



The Gift of Life

- All life is a precious gift from a loving and grace-filled God *Genesis 2:7*
- We have been created in God's image *Genesis 1:27*
- He sustains all things *Hebrews 1:3*
- God Heals our diseases *Psalms 103:3*
- Without Him was nothing was made that has been made *John 1:2*



COVID Conscious, Living Wisely!



Photo by Hakan Nural on Unsplash

Lifestyle

- Lifestyle principles are *foundational* to the Seventh-day Adventist Health Message and germane to who we are
- Despite our brokenness, optimal lifestyle practices foster positive health outcomes
- This includes our “*fearfully and wonderfully made*” immune system – what a Creator our God is!! (*Psalm 139*)
- *Immunization works through this amazingly designed and effective defense system, a mechanism given by God and relying on His creative and sustaining power.*



COVID Conscious, Living Wisely!



“Givens” in Healthful Living

- Make wise choices
- Exercise daily
- Drink adequate volumes of pure water
- Enjoy controlled exposure to sunshine
- Know and trust God
- Adequate amounts of rest and sleep (includes specific vacation time)
- Breathe pure, fresh air
- True temperance
- Optimal nutrition
- Caring and protective relationships
- Optimism
- Integrity



Lifestyle Interventions are foundational

- CELEBRATIONS®
- NEWSTART®
- Newstart-*plus*®
- CREATION HEALTH®
- 8 Weeks to Wellness®
- Win Wellness® ... and more

*And an important adjuvant to prevention is immunization – it is **not** either or.*



COVID Conscious, Living Wisely!



Photo by Hakan Nural on Unsplash

What does the Church say about vaccines?

- Statement from 2014: “... *the Church encourages responsible immunization, and as such we have no religious or faith-based reason not to encourage our adherents to responsibly participate in protective and preventive immunization programs.*”

Responsible immunization – thought through, studied, evidence-based - as we have discussed today in this symposium...



COVID Conscious, Living Wisely!



What does the Church say about immunization?

“We are not the conscience of the individual church member, and recognize individual choices. These are exercised by the individual. The choice not to be immunized is not and should not be seen as the dogma nor the doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” Immunization Statement 2014

<https://www.adventist.org/articles/immunization/>



COVID Conscious, Living Wisely!



Photo by Hakan Nural on Unsplash

What does the Church say about COVID-19 Vaccines?

- <https://adventist.news/en/news/covid-19-vaccines-addressing-concerns-offering-counsel>
- <https://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story15816-covid-19-vaccines-addressing-concerns,-offering-counsel>

An article about the COVID-19 vaccine, written by representatives from the General Conference Department of Health Ministries, General Conference Biblical Research Institute, and Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy and School of Public Health



COVID Conscious, Living Wisely!



What does the Church say about COVID-19 vaccines?

- “The global upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has generated considerable speculations related to end-time events and misinterpretations of the Bible. One recent view, propagated through social media and some internet websites, has put forward the theory that the upcoming vaccines produced to combat COVID-19 belong to a process of control that will lead to the application of the mark of the beast.
- *It should be noted, however, that Adventists hold to the conviction that the end-time controversy will center on the law of God, and particularly on the fourth commandment (Rev 14:12). Moreover, the third angel’s message will warn against the reception of the mark (Rev 14:9–11) and will enlighten humankind as to the issues involved.*
- **For this reason, it should be made clear that Seventh-day Adventists understand the “mark of the beast” to be not a literal mark but a sign of allegiance that identifies the bearer as loyal to the power represented by the beast.**



COVID Conscious, Living Wisely!



What does the Church say about COVID-19 vaccines?

- From a distinct perspective, another speculative view argues that vaccines make those who take them unclean because, supposedly, unclean substances are used to produce them. In this regard, *it should be clarified that the abiding biblical instructions forbidding the consumption of unclean food and blood (Lev 11:1–20; 17:11–12; Acts 15:20) do not apply to vaccines for the obvious reason that vaccines are produced as medication to save lives, not to serve as food.*



COVID Conscious, Living Wisely!



Conclusions

- Immunization, along with sanitation and clean water, has been foundational to the improved longevity seen around the world where these interventions have been applied. ***Vaccines have long been used by Adventist church members throughout the world. Along with good health practices, they have provided protection against many infections and prevented illness and death.***



COVID Conscious, Living Wisely!



Photo by Hakan Nural on Unsplash

Conclusions

- As we witness the global magnitude of the pandemic, the deaths, disability, and long-term COVID-19 effects that are emerging in all age groups, ***we are encouraging our members to consider responsible immunization and the promotion and facilitation of the development of what is commonly termed herd immunity*** (pre-existing community immunity of approximately 80 percent of individuals as a result of previous infection and/or vaccination).

Note: Encouraging – not mandating!



COVID Conscious, Living Wisely!



Photo by Hakan Nural on Unsplash

Conclusions

- ***: THE DECISION TO BE IMMUNIZED OR NOT IS THE CHOICE OF EACH INDIVIDUAL, AND SHOULD BE TAKEN IN CONSULTATION WITH ONE'S HEALTH-CARE PROVIDER. PERSONAL RESEARCH ON THE SUBJECT IS IMPORTANT. WE ULTIMATELY RELY ON FOLLOWING BIBLICAL HEALTH PRACTICES AND THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY, AND FOLLOWING GOD'S LEADING IN OUR LIVES, WHICH WILL BRING US PEACE AND ASSURANCE IN OUR DECISION-MAKING.***

<https://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story15816-covid-19-vaccines-addressing-concerns,-offering-counsel>



COVID Conscious, Living Wisely!



Photo by Hakan Nural on Unsplash

Procuring vaccines

- DMAs
- ISEs

The Church's health entities in the USA and around the world are subject to state and governmental regulatory systems. This is especially so with Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) as with the COVID-19 vaccines. We function with integrity and fairness; we are therefore unable to procure vaccines outside of the fixed regulations which are meticulously enforced and all need to await triage according to vulnerabilities and occupational risks.



COVID Conscious, Living Wisely!



Photo by Hakan Nural on Unsplash

- <https://www.healthministries.com/coronavirus/>
COVID-19 advice and information from General Conference Health Ministries
- <https://www.adventist.org/articles/immunization/>
Immunization information; links to more specific information about COVID-19 vaccines



COVID Conscious, Living Wisely!



Photo by Hakan Nural on Unsplash