

# Vaccination and the Issue of “Voluntary Consent”. The Rights of Individuals to Control their Bodies

By [National Vaccine Information Centre \(NVIC\)](#) and [Dr.](#)

Theme: [Science and Medicine](#)

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*“The Nuremberg Code explicitly rejects the moral argument that the creation of benefits for the many justifies the sacrifices for the few. Every experiment, no matter how important or valuable, requires the express voluntary consent of the individual. The rights of individuals to control their bodies trumps the interests of others.” – Arthur Caplan, Bioethicist, 1992*

This quote from bioethicist Caplan is a fine statement for his times, but, 3 decades later, well-informed, (non-corporate-based) scientists and other ethical experts would agree that, today, in 2020, the quote should be amended thusly:

*“Today the ‘experimenters’ in 2020, should be identified as the powerful, influential, wealthy, profit-seeking corporate entities that are seeking profits from the sacrifices of those that are uninterested, uninformed, thoroughly propagandized or otherwise ‘enslaved.’”*

–Dr. Gary G. Kohls, February 1, 2021

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Frequently Asked Questions About Informed Consent

by National Vaccine Information Centre (NVIC)

*Informed consent has been the central ethical principle of the practice of modern medicine since the Nuremberg Code was issued by the Nuremberg Tribunal after World War II. Although the Nuremberg Code specifically addressed the human right for human beings to give their voluntary informed consent to participate in scientific experiments, the First Principle of the Nuremberg Code has become an ethical standard for allowing patients to give their voluntary consent to engage in medical interventions that carry a risk of harm.*

The first principle of the Nuremberg Code includes the following language:

“The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential. This

means that the person involved should have legal capacity to give consent, should be so situated as to be able to exercise free power of choice, without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, overreaching or other ulterior form of constraint or coercion; and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved as to enable him to make an understanding and enlightened decision.....”

This informed consent principle has been embraced by enlightened physicians, hospitals, HMO’s and medical researchers to protect the right of patients and their guardians to voluntarily accept or decline medical interventions, including testing, use of prescription drugs and surgery that involve a risk of injury or death.

Vaccination is a medical intervention that carries a risk of injury or death, which is greater for some than others. Therefore, the right to voluntary, informed consent to vaccination can be considered a human right.

As your child’s legal guardian, you are responsible for your child’s health and well being. You have the responsibility to become fully informed about vaccines and you should have the right make voluntary choices about whether or not to risk your life or your child’s life with a vaccine or any other procedure a medical doctor recommends.

If you, as a parent, are concerned that continuing vaccination would harm your child and a doctor is insisting more vaccines be given without your voluntary consent, you should contact another trusted health care professional for a second opinion. If your child has experienced health deterioration after previous vaccinations, it is important listen to your parental instincts and be totally comfortable with a vaccination decision for your child before proceeding with more vaccination.

The more educated you become about vaccines, the more empowered you will become and the better able you will be to stand up for your right to informed consent to medical risk taking. To learn more about informed consent, click [here](#).

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