

## Next up on the gene-edited pig heart transplant list? Babies

[A] baboon is the first to receive a heart transplant from a young gene-edited pig as part of a study that should pave the way for similar transplants in human babies, says [Eli] Katz, chief medical officer at the biotech company Genesis.

The company, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has developed a technique that uses the gene-editing tool CRISPR to make around 70 edits to a pig's genome. These edits should allow the organs to be successfully transplanted into people, the team says. As soon as next year, eGenesis hopes to transplant pig hearts into babies with serious heart defects. The goal is to buy them more time to wait for a human heart.

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Before that happens, the team at eGenesis will practice on 12 infant baboons. Two such surgeries have been performed so far. Neither animal survived beyond a matter of days.

But the company is optimistic, as are others in the field. Many recipients of the first liver transplants didn't survive either—but thousands of people have since benefited from such transplants, says Robert Montgomery, director of the NYU Langone Transplant Institute, who has worked with rival company United Therapeutics. Babies born with heart conditions represent “a great population to be focusing on,” he says, “because so many of them die.”

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the full article here\*\*](#)