

100,000 Americans are waiting for transplants. Could pig-grown organs close this gap?

The need for more transplant organs [is immense](#) and growing. Some scientists think animal organs might be a good way to increase the supply, but the science has been stalled as researchers tried to figure out how to prevent organ rejection and avoid dangerous infections. They also have to untangle complicated [ethical questions](#), including how to test such organs.

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Researchers have transplanted genetically modified pig kidneys and hearts into people who were brain-dead to test whether they work in humans. [\[January 18\]](#), doctors showed that a pig liver could filter blood when attached to a recently deceased person. [\[January 25\]](#), doctors said they had identified the mix of immunosuppressants needed to prevent pig kidneys from being rejected by human bodies.

And twice, surgeons have transplanted genetically modified hearts into living people: willing test subjects who understood that their deaths were imminent and that no transplant was likely to save them but that xenotransplantation could save many lives in the future.

## Waitlist for organ transplants in the US is twice as long as the number completed in 2023

There were 46,630 organ transplants performed in 2023, but more than 103,000 people are on the waiting list.



Note: Waitlist data as of Jan. 29, 2024. Other includes pancreas, kidney/pancreas and allograft transplants such as hands and abdominal wall.

Source: Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network

Graphic: Deidre McPhillips, CNN

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