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Doctors CAN perform life-saving surgery on baby that Jehovah's Witnesses refused to allow on religious grounds

- 2-month-old baby's parents would not consent to blood transfusion
- Doctors will now be able to go through with the surgery after court ruling

By [Sara Malm](#)

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A baby will have a life-saving heart surgery despite his parents refusing because they are Jehovah's Witnesses, a judge ruled yesterday.

Doctors at Texas Children's Hospital will operate on two-month-old Gabriel Zepeda after State District Judge Michael Gomez signed an order to allow it against his parents' will.

Despite the life-or-death situation, the infant's parents would not to consent on religious ground as Jehovah's Witnesses are forbidden to accept blood transfusions



Saving a life: without the surgery there is a risk that 2-month-old Gabriel Zepeda will die, but his parents would still not allow a transfusion (Picture not related to story)

The hospital's lawyers said in their petition to the court that unless the surgery is performed there is a risk to the baby's life, stating: 'It is the opinion of Dr Douglas Moody, Gabriel's cardiologist, that the boy will suffer permanent harm of death unless he receives this operation.'

Judge Gomez signed the order permitting the hospital to provide Gabriel with 'life-sustaining medical treatment, including blood products'.

Dr Moody called the surgery life-sustaining and told the court that unless it was performed Gabriel risked 'significant heart-failure'.

Gabriel has a rare condition where holes in his cardiovascular system fills his lungs with blood.



Texas Children's Hospital where the surgery will take place. A spokesperson for the hospital confirmed on Wednesday night that Gabriel was in a stable condition

Although his parents were aware of this and the risk it posed to his life the hospital petition states that they 'refused to consent'.

Jehovah's Witnesses see blood transfusions as a sin believing God has forbidden it in Bible passages such as Acts 15:19-20 where it says to 'abstain from the pollution of idols, from sexual immorality, from what is strangled, and from blood.'

Many carry an anti-donor card in case of emergencies which states that they refuse any types of blood transfusions even in life-threatening situations.

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