

Heart

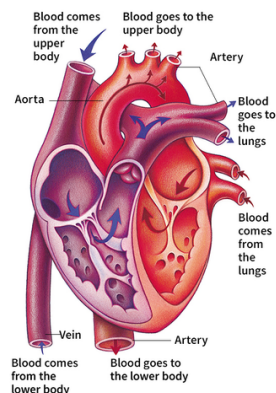
Introduction

The heart is a pump that powers the human body. It lies near the center of your chest, between the lungs. An adult's heart is about the size of a fist.

With each heartbeat, the heart sends blood through our bodies. Blood carries oxygen and food to every part of the body. The heart starts pumping about seven months before we are born. When it stops beating, unless a machine can keep our blood flowing, we die.

The heart is really two pumps lying side by side. Tubes called veins << vaynz >> carry blood from the body into the right-sided pump. That pump sends blood to the lungs. In the lungs, the blood picks up oxygen. The blood then flows into the left-sided pump. That pump sends the blood throughout the body in big veins called arteries. Your heart pumps all your blood through your body every minute.

Your heart beats more slowly when you sleep because your body needs less oxygen then. Your heart beats much faster when you jump rope or ride a bike. It also speeds up when you need to fight off danger or run away from it. Your body needs more oxygen at those times.



How the heart pumps blood

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