

## LEARNING ABOUT HEART DISEASE

### INTRODUCTION

Was there anything in yesterday's teaching that you did not understand or was not clear? If yes, write down your question(s) to ask the doctor or nurse on your next visit.

My question(s):	Reason why I am asking:

### HEART DISEASE AND YOUR HEART

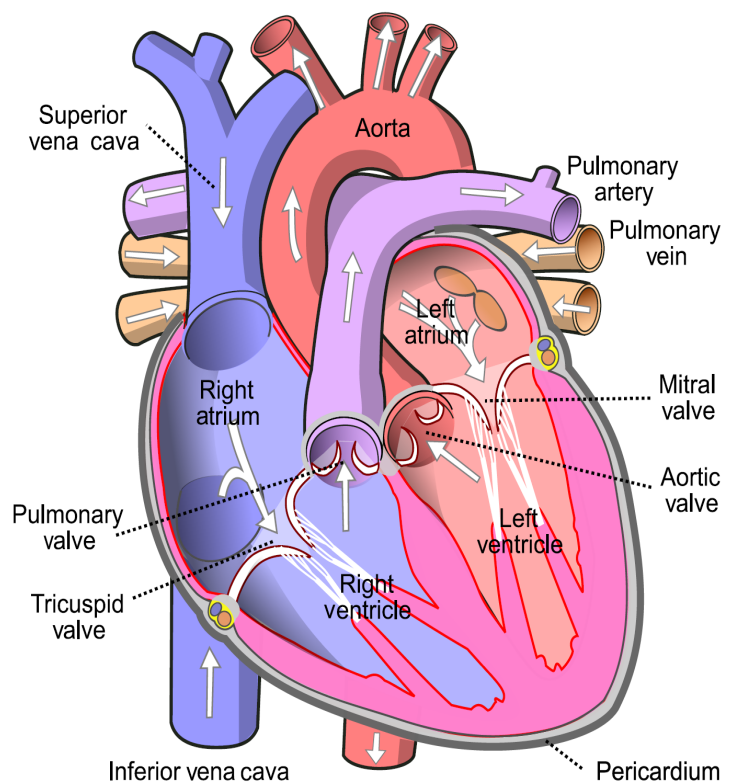
To better understand heart disease, we should know a bit more about the human heart and the blood vessels that supply the heart.

#### YOUR HEART

The heart is the hardest working muscle in the human body. Located near the center of the chest, a healthy adult heart is the size of a clenched adult fist. By age 70, the human heart will beat more than 2.5 billion times. The heart is always working. It pumps about 2,000 gallons of blood daily.

Your heart pumps blood and oxygen to all parts of your body. At rest, your heart beats between 60 and 100 beats per minute.

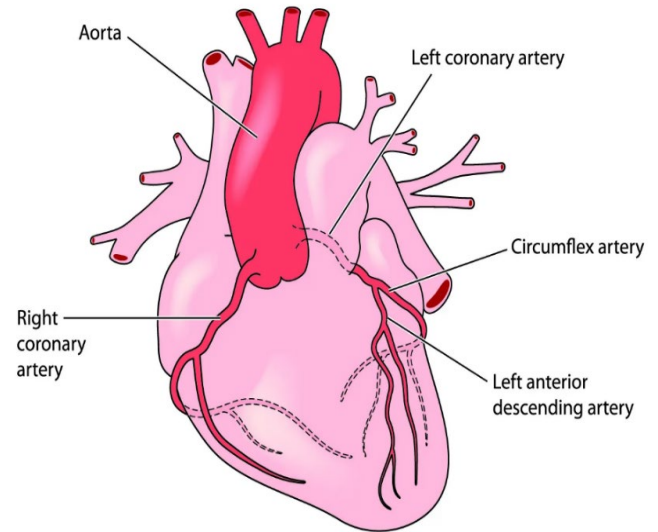
The heart is divided into two parts: the **right-side** and the **left-side**. Each side has 2 chambers (like rooms). The top chamber is called the atrium. The



bottom chamber is called the ventricle. There are 4 one-way valves in your heart that open and close when your heart beats. This helps your blood continue to move in the right direction to make sure that your body always gets the blood that it needs.

## HEART BLOOD VESSELS

The main blood vessels of your heart are the right coronary artery, the left main coronary, the left anterior descending, and the left circumflex artery. Like all other tissues in the body, the heart needs oxygen-rich blood to function. These blood vessels bring blood and oxygen to your heart. This keeps your heart alive and helps it to pump blood through your body. The heart arteries wrap around the outside of the heart.

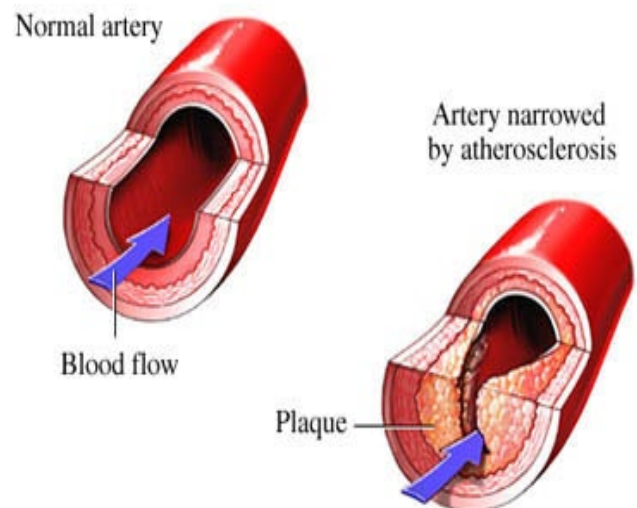


## HEART DISEASE AND WHAT IT MEANS

Heart disease is a broad term that describes a group of conditions affecting the heart. Coronary artery disease is the most common type of heart disease.

**Coronary artery disease (CAD)** Happens when one or more of the coronary arteries in the heart become narrowed or blocked. This is caused by a build up of fat and cholesterol (plaque) in the heart artery(s) and is known as atherosclerosis.

**What are the symptoms of coronary artery disease?** Angina, or chest pain and discomfort, is the most common symptom of CAD. Angina can happen when too much plaque builds up inside arteries, causing them to narrow. Narrowed arteries can cause chest pain because they can block blood flow to your heart muscle and the rest of your body. For many people, the first clue that they have CAD is a heart attack.



**How can I be healthier if I have coronary artery disease?** If you have CAD, your health care team may suggest ways to help lower your risk for a heart attack or worsening of heart disease:

- Lifestyle changes, such as eating a healthier (reducing salt and fat) diet, increasing physical activity, reaching a healthy weight, and quitting smoking can have a big impact on your health.
- Medicines to treat risk factors for CAD, such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or an irregular heartbeat are helpful to reduce your risk of CAD progressing.
- Surgical procedures to help restore blood flow to the heart is an option for advanced CAD.

## LEARN MORE

At the MB ACS Network website at: <https://mbacsnetwork.ca/education> or scan the QR Code:

