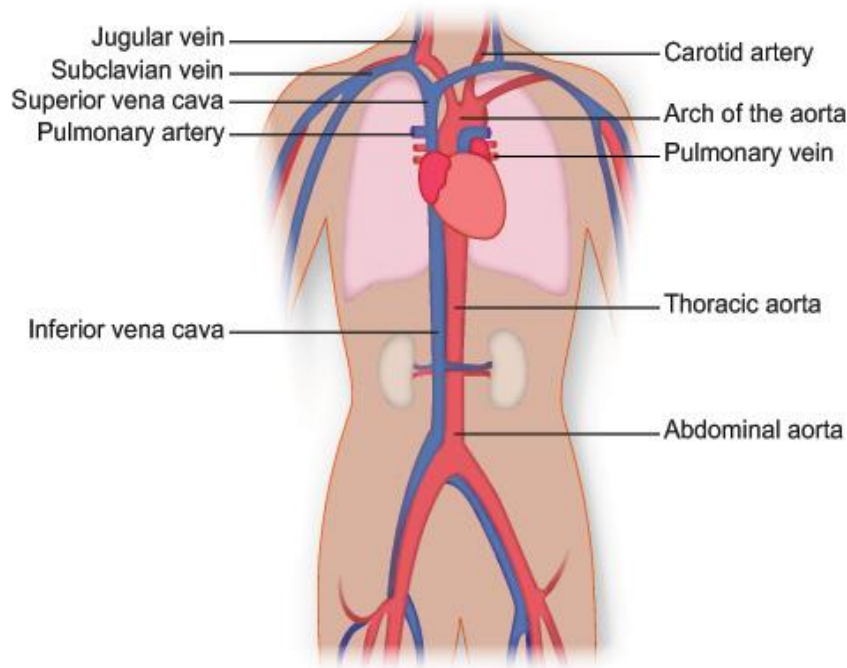


CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM

Arteries carry oxygen-rich blood away from your heart, and veins carry oxygen-poor blood back to your heart.



Circulatory Loops

There are 2 primary circulatory loops in the human body: the *pulmonary circulation loop* and the *systemic circulation loop*.

1. Pulmonary circulation transports deoxygenated blood from the right side of the heart to the lungs, where the blood picks up oxygen and returns to the left side of the heart. The pumping chambers of the heart that support the pulmonary circulation loop are the right atrium and right ventricle.
2. Systemic circulation carries highly oxygenated blood from the left side of the heart to all of the tissues of the body (with the exception of the heart and lungs). Systemic circulation removes wastes from body tissues and returns deoxygenated blood to the right side of the heart. The left atrium and left ventricle of the heart are the pumping chambers for the systemic circulation loop.

Blood Vessels

Blood vessels are the body's highways that allow blood to flow quickly and efficiently from the heart to every region of the body and back again. The size of blood vessels corresponds with the amount of blood that passes through the vessel. All blood vessels contain a hollow area called the lumen through which blood is able to flow. Around the lumen is the wall of the vessel, which may be thin in the case of capillaries or very thick in the case of arteries.