



THE NORMAL HEART

In order to understand what a complex heart condition means, it is helpful to understand what the normal heart does. The heart's job is to pump blood around the body. There are two separate circulations; the first takes blood to the lungs (the right side of the heart), and the second takes blood to the body (the left side of the heart).

This is how the journey begins: blood returns from the body, via veins, to the right side of the heart into a collecting chamber called the right atrium. This blood has a bluish tinge (blue blood) because the body has extracted oxygen from it (deoxygenated blood).

The blood is then passed through a valve (Tricuspid) to a pumping chamber (Right Ventricle), which pumps the blood to the lungs via the lung arteries (Pulmonary Arteries).

The blood picks up oxygen as it passes through the lungs which turns the blood a red colour (oxygenated blood). This blood then returns to the left collecting chamber (Left Atrium) and it then passes through a valve (Mitral) to the left pumping chamber (Left Ventricle). The Left Ventricle then pumps blood to the body through a valve (Aortic) and to the body via the body artery (Aorta). The body uses the oxygen from the blood turning it blue again. And the journey starts again.