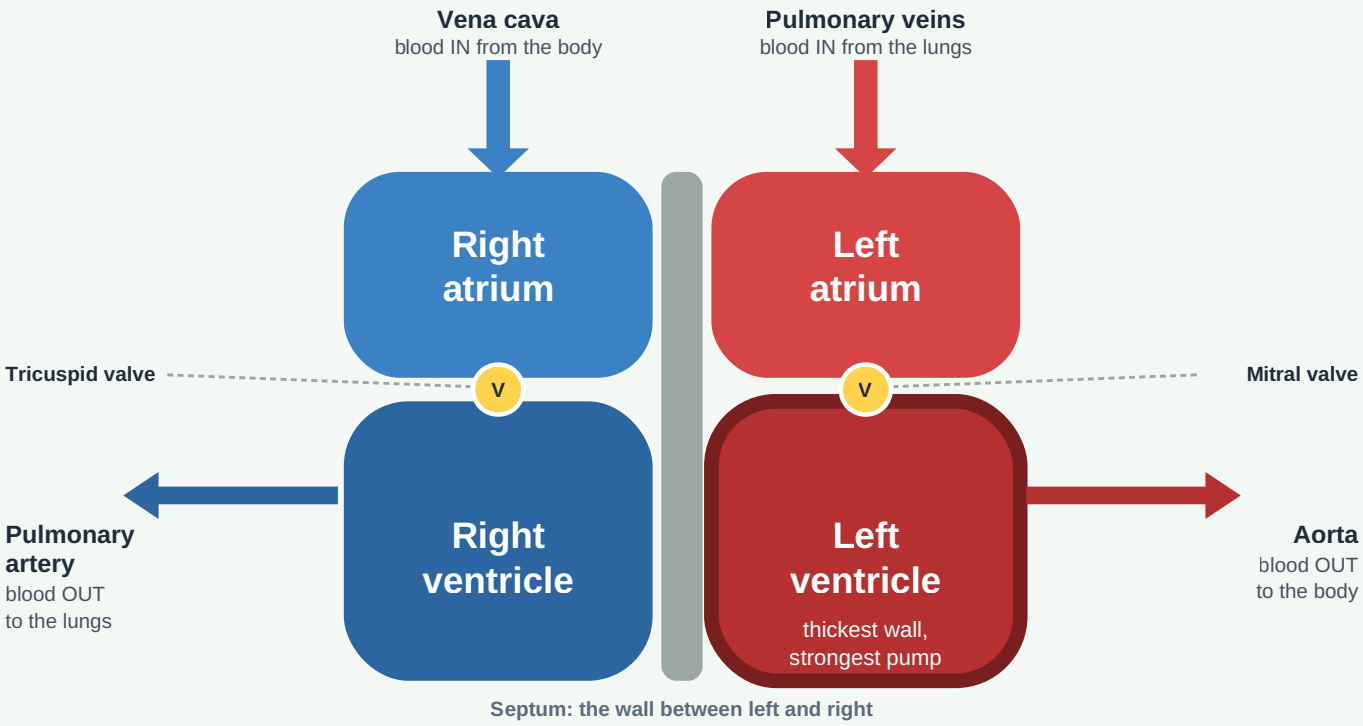
SafeServe First Aid

HOW THE HEART WORKS

The heart: four chambers, four jobs

The heart is a muscular pump about the size of your fist. A wall called the septum splits it into a **right side** that sends blood to the lungs and a **left side** that sends blood to the body. Each side has an **atrium** on top that receives blood and a **ventricle** below that pumps it out.



Septum: the wall between left and right

TOP RIGHT

Right atrium AY-tree-um

Receives low-oxygen blood from the body through the vena cava, then passes it through the tricuspid valve into the right ventricle. The natural pacemaker of the heart, the SA node, sits here.

BOTTOM RIGHT

Right ventricle VEN-trik-ul

Pumps low-oxygen blood through the pulmonary valve into the pulmonary artery. It travels to the lungs to pick up oxygen.

TOP LEFT

Left atrium AY-tree-um

Receives oxygen-rich blood back from the lungs through the pulmonary veins, then passes it through the mitral valve into the left ventricle.

BOTTOM LEFT

Left ventricle VEN-trik-ul

The strongest chamber, with the thickest wall. Pumps oxygen-rich blood through the aortic valve into the aorta (ay-OR-ta), and out to the whole body.

The journey of a drop of blood

Body → Right atrium → Right ventricle → Lungs → Left atrium → Left ventricle → Body

Why it matters: the heart muscle needs its own blood supply, from the coronary arteries. If one is blocked, that part of the muscle is starved of blood. This is a heart attack. If the heart's electrical signal fails, the chambers stop pumping together. This is cardiac arrest.

Blue is low-oxygen blood, red is oxygen-rich. Shown as if facing the person. Heart attack and cardiac arrest: British Heart Foundation.

Learn CPR and defibrillator use hands-on.
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