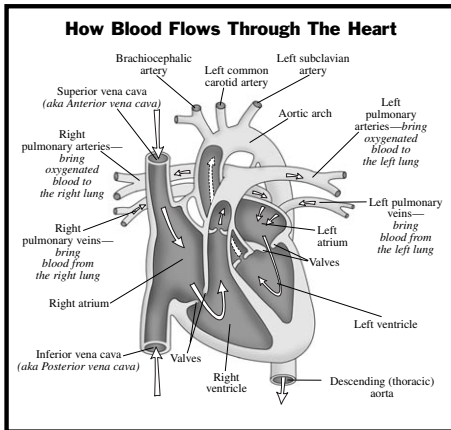


HOW TO BE STRONG AT HEART - A HEALTH GUIDE FOR TEENS



At www.parade.com/heart you can check out an animated illustration of the heart.

Inside the Heart

The heart is essentially a hollow muscle, divided into four chambers. They are the right atrium, right ventricle, left atrium and left ventricle. Each time the heart beats, it pumps blood out of the organ. When the muscle relaxes, blood fills the heart again. The right sides and left sides of the heart do different things. The right side collects blood from the body and pumps it to the lungs. There it collects oxygen and releases carbon dioxide. Then the heart's left side collects the oxygenated blood from the lungs, and pumps it back through the body. In that way, all the cells get the oxygen they need to work.

So how does high cholesterol affect your heart? Cholesterol is a waxy substance that is found in all parts of the body. Your body actually needs it to function

properly. The problem comes when you have too much. Cholesterol and other substances build up in the inner lining of the arteries, forming a plaque. Plaques can make your arteries narrower, but most of the damage occurs when plaques rupture and cause blood clots to form. A blood clot can block an artery that feeds the heart, causing a heart attack. If the blockage is in an artery in your brain, you can have a stroke. So where does cholesterol come from? Some comes directly from the food you eat, like red meat and eggs. The body also can turn saturated fat into cholesterol, and the liver makes its own cholesterol. To confuse things further, not all cholesterol is bad. LDL is bad cholesterol. It clogs your arteries. HDL is good cholesterol and actually removes LDL from the blood. Total cholesterol should be kept under 200. It's best for LDL to be under 100. HDL should not be lower than 40.



Heart to Heart

Does your paper have a weekly health or science section? Look through several issues. Can you find any information about the heart? Can you find references to other health issues that may affect teenagers? Write the headlines below.



The American Heart Association has a quiz that can help you learn about your risk for heart disease.

Visit <http://americanheart.org> to take the quiz in English or Spanish. You'll not only learn about your own risk factors but also get expert advice on what you can do to stay healthy.

Serving Up Life Skills to Teens

The recipe might call for ground beef, but why not try something leaner, like ground turkey, instead? And for dessert: How about some fresh fruit? That's the nutrition-conscious approach Kris Woolery typically takes when she's helping teens prepare meals at Brainfood, a Columbia Heights nonprofit that sponsors healthy-cooking classes for District teens.

"I'm trying to create a culture... [where] we're trying to think about what we're eating," said Woolery, program director for the group, whose participants come mostly from low-income families. A free six-week summer program, the Brainfood Summer In- offers teens an intensive course in healthy cooking and par- activities. The program runs from

