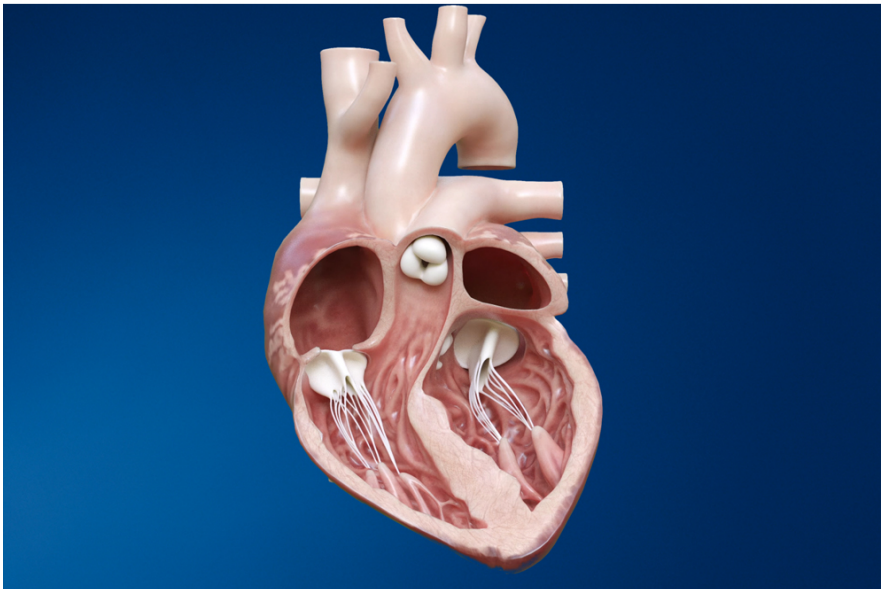




## What Does the Heart Do?



### Overview

Your heart is the muscular powerhouse that beats day and night to pump blood through your body. Let's take a moment to learn more about this vital organ.

### Healthy heart

A healthy heart is about the size of a fist. It's found behind your breastbone, and slightly to the left side of your body. It's positioned between your lungs. Your left lung is actually a bit smaller than your right lung to make room for your heart.

### The heart's role

Your heart's job is to take in oxygen-rich blood from your lungs and push it out into your body's arteries. This is how oxygen gets to all the cells of your body. And at the same time the heart does this, it takes in the blood that has already visited your cells and sends it to your lungs, where waste gas is removed. Your heart's strong muscle tissue, along with an intricate system of chambers and valves, lets it send blood where it needs to go. Special cells in the heart generate electrical signals that control the rate and rhythm of your heartbeat. These electrical signals travel from the top of the heart to the bottom.

### Focus on heart health

Sometimes, the heart becomes diseased or damaged. Things like valve problems, heart failure and heart attack can cause serious issues. They can be fatal. So it's important to keep your heart healthy by eating a heart-healthy diet, staying active and controlling your weight. If you smoke, quit. For more info, talk to your doctor.