

*How your
Blood Around
take your*

**HOW YOUR
HEART WORKS**

bring large reductions in the amount of disability from heart disease.

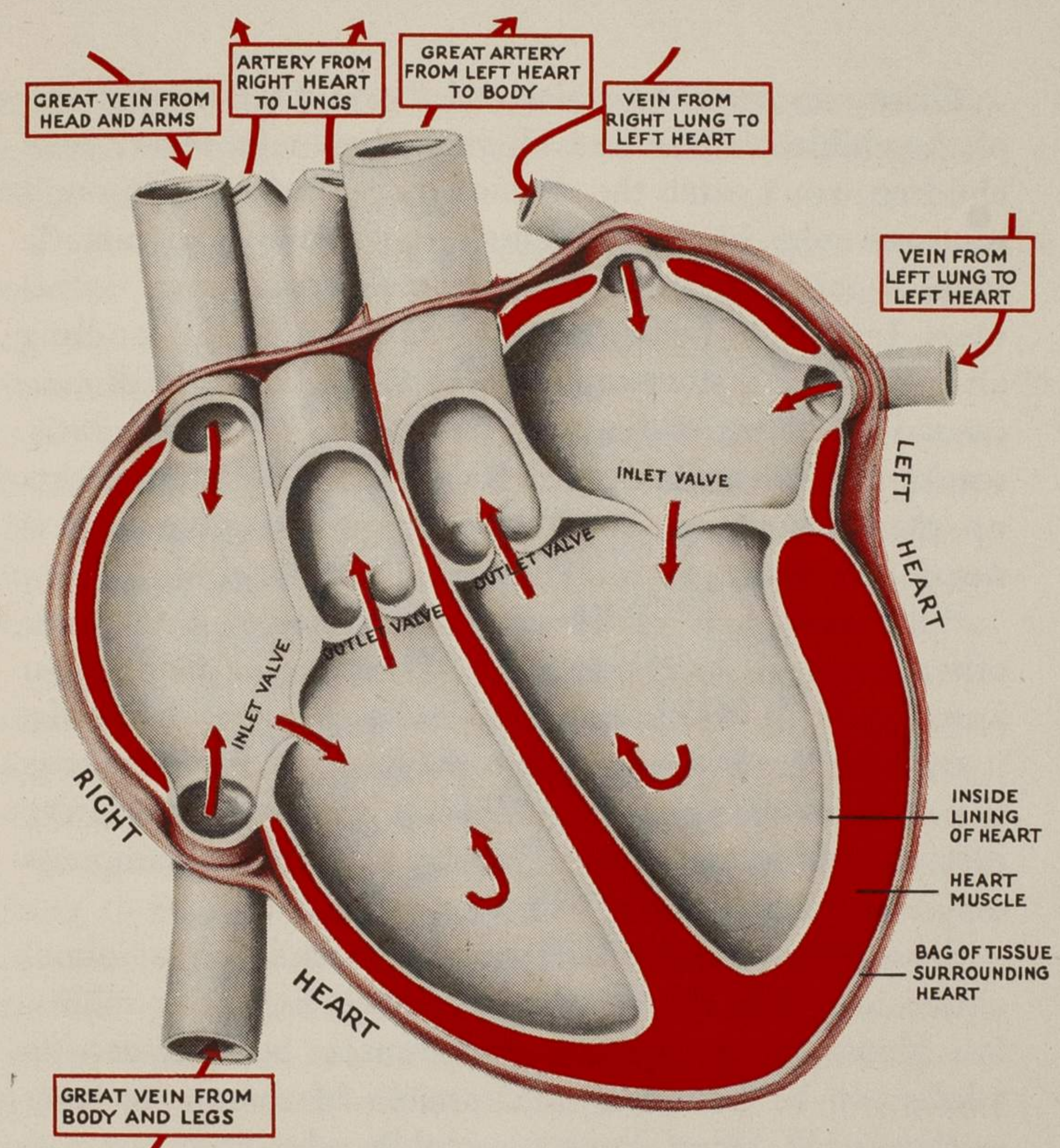
Your heart is a very strong organ. It's only about the size of a large fist, but most of its bulk is muscle. Its one job is to pump out into the arteries the blood returned to it by the veins (see the diagram). All the millions of cells in the body depend upon the rapidly circulating blood stream for life-giving oxygen and other nourishment and for the removal of wastes.

Your blood makes up only about 8 percent of your body weight. But to keep that blood in circulation through miles of blood vessels during an ordinary day of work, play, and rest, the healthy heart pumps many, many hundreds of gallons of blood at an average daily rate of 70-80 strokes a minute. Its normal pumping action is a continuous series of regular contractions and relaxations — beat-rest, beat-rest, beat-rest.

Your heart normally rests twice as much as it works. But during periods of strenuous physical activity or emotional strain, it may beat twice as fast as usual and pump out twice as much blood. The faster the heart beats, the harder it works, and the less time it has to rest. This is the reason why doctors put so much emphasis on moderation for middle-aged people and those with sick hearts.

**RHEUMATIC
FEVER**

Perhaps you don't worry about your own heart but have a tendency to feel a little anxious sometimes about your children's hearts. If or when you do, it's reassuring to remember that only a few children out of every thousand get rheumatic fever, which precedes rheumatic heart disease, and that in recent years deaths from rheumatic fever have been sharply curtailed.



The heart is a powerful hollow muscle divided, by a muscular wall, into two main divisions — a right and a left. Each division has two chambers which work together as a unit. The blood stream flows from the body into the right side of the heart through veins. From there it is pumped to the lungs, where it gets rid of a waste gas (carbon dioxide) collected from the body cells and picks up a load of oxygen to carry to the body cells. After passing through the lungs the blood stream flows into the left side of the heart, from which it is pumped to the body through arteries.

The drawing on this page is not an exact representation of the heart in cross-section, but rather a pictorial diagram to show the course taken by the blood from the body → to the heart → to the lungs → back to the heart → and out to the body again.