

Your Heart—Small but Strong

This month in THE GREAT BODY SHOP, your child is studying the heart. We urge you to reinforce the material by discussing the issue with your child at home.

Lesson 1: Your Heart, Small but Strong

Lesson 2: How to Care for Your Heart

Lesson 3: Heart Problems and Heart Helpers

Lesson 4: Have a Heart

Try This . . .

Have your child hold his/her right hand straight up in the air for one minute, while keeping the left at his/her side. Then, lower the right arm and compare it to the left—what difference can your child notice? Why? (*The right arm will be paler because some of the blood has drained out of it.*)

You might also notice that the veins in the left hand are bigger. That is because they are filled with blood which makes them appear to bulge. Explain to your child that blood travels in “tubes” throughout the body. Veins are one kind of tube. They carry blood back to the heart from the body. Arteries are another kind of tube; they carry blood out to the body from the heart.

Can You Guess?

See if you can stump your child with this riddle:
Whose heart beats faster—a baby’s or an adult’s?

Answer upside down:

A baby’s. Its heart needs to pump faster because it is so small. A baby’s heart weighs about 1 ounce; an adult’s heart weighs about 1 pound.

Use It or Lose It!

Your heart, that is! Encourage your child to get some exercise every day. Sixty minutes a day of moderate to vigorous exercise is recommended. You might have to start by limiting TV and/or computer time.

Bad News, Good News

1. Heart disease is the #1 cause of death in the US today. However, there are things you can do to keep your heart healthy and to reduce your chances of heart disease.
2. Keep your weight down to normal. Make nutritious choices and limit portion sizes.
3. If you smoke, stop. Quitting can cut your risk of heart attack by as much as 70%. Besides, your example is most important in your children’s decision to smoke or not.
4. Cut down on fats. Switch to non-fat dairy products. Choose lean cuts of meat. Replace butter and margarine with vegetable oil.
5. Have your blood pressure checked. If you are prone to high blood pressure, have it checked regularly.
6. Exercise for sixty minutes each day of the week. Exercise doesn’t mean you have to pump iron—your heart would love a nice, brisk walk after dinner. And remember, it’s not too early to get your child in the habit of exercising. Why not walk together?

Answers to “The Puzzler’s Challenge”:

1. blood
2. faster
3. nutrients
4. strong

