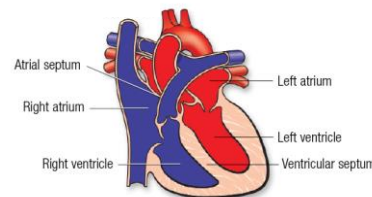


The Heart and Normal Blood Flow

A normal heart is a strong pump about the size of a fist. Heart muscles work hard to bring oxygen-rich blood to different parts of your body. Many individuals with 22q are born with congenital heart defects, typically **conotruncal heart defects** involving the **cardiac outflow tract** and the **aortic arch**, which may require surgical treatment and/or long-term monitoring. To understand these heart defects, let's first find out what a normal heart looks like and how the blood typically flows.

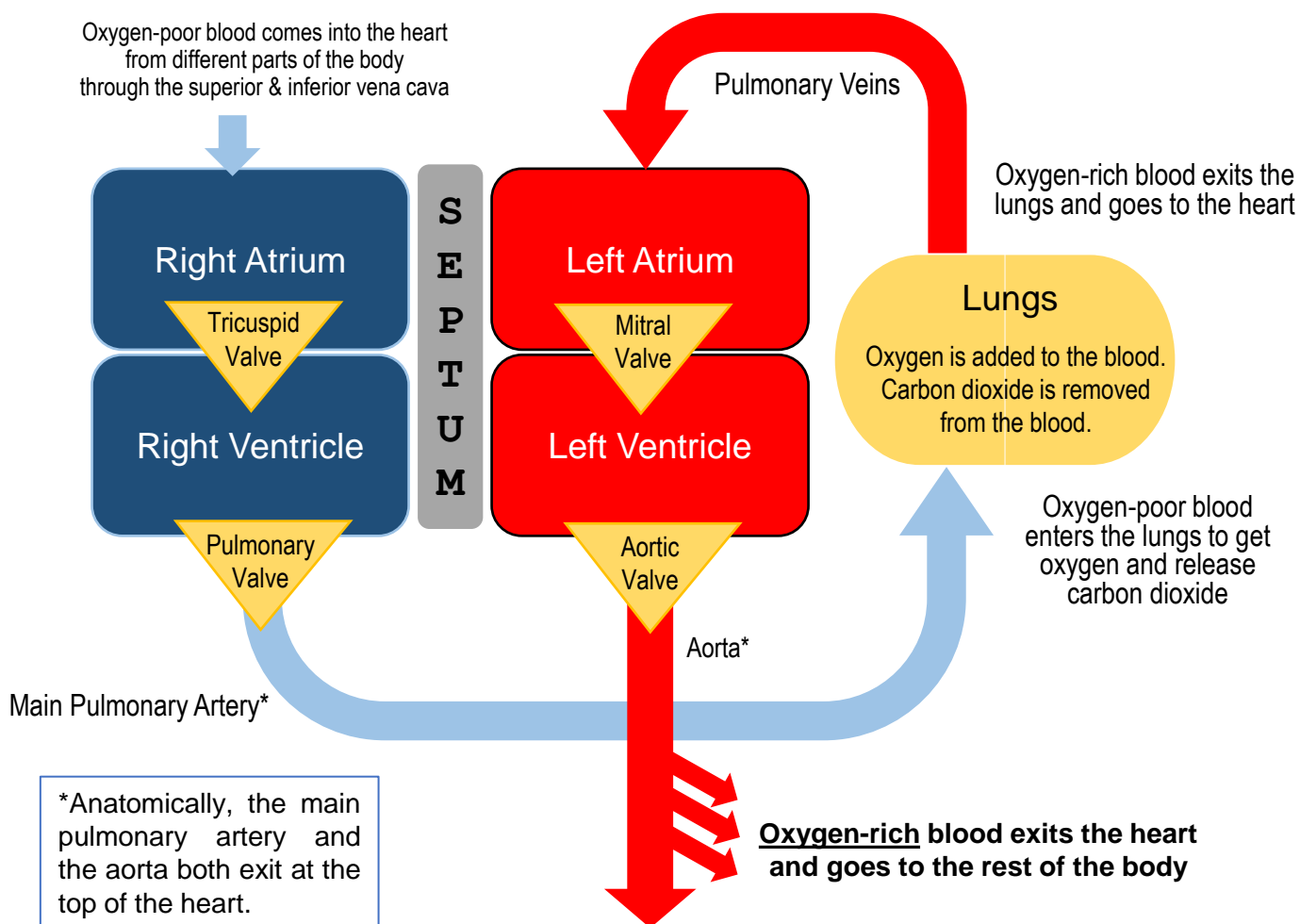
As seen in the schematic diagram below, **oxygen-poor blood (bluish)** arrives at the **right** chambers of the heart before being pumped to the lungs to get oxygen and release carbon dioxide. **Oxygen-rich blood (red)** goes from the lungs to the **left** chambers of the heart, where it is pumped to the rest of the body.



Please click on the image to see a larger version on the website of the [American Heart Association](http://www.heart.org)

A Schematic Diagram of the Heart and Normal Blood Flow

Shown as if you are facing the patient; Not to scale



For more info, please visit the websites of the [CDC](http://www.cdc.gov) or the [American Heart Association](http://www.heart.org).