

The Human Circulatory System

Underneath our skin, various systems are constantly working in order to keep us alive and well. The most important of these is called the Circulatory System. The Circulatory System includes three components: a pump, five litres of liquid, and about sixty thousand miles of tube.

The heart is the pump. It pumps blood (the liquid) through blood vessels (the tubes), there being two types of blood vessels, known as arteries and veins.

The heart pumps blood around two separate circuits, like a numeral 8, except with one circuit being much bigger than the other. First, blood is pumped out around the smaller circuit, where it passes through the lungs and oxygen is added.

The blood, which is now rich with oxygen, returns to the heart. It is then pumped out through a different tube around the bigger circuit. On its way around this circuit, nutrients are added as it passes through the small intestine, part of the digestive system, where the goodness is extracted from food and added to the blood.

The blood, rich with oxygen and nutrients, circulates all around the body, feeding the different parts with both oxygen and nutrients, at the same time as taking away waste products.

Finally, the old blood returns to the heart, where it is pumped around the smaller loop, more oxygen is added to refresh it, and it begins its journey around once again, the tubes taking the fresh blood out being known as arteries, and those returning the old blood back to the heart being known as veins.

1. Why do we need to breathe in order to stay alive?

2. What happens when we eat and why does it help us to remain healthy?

3. Why does blood need to circulate around the body?

4. How many circuits are there and what is the difference between them?

5. What is the difference between a vein and an artery?
