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Glossary

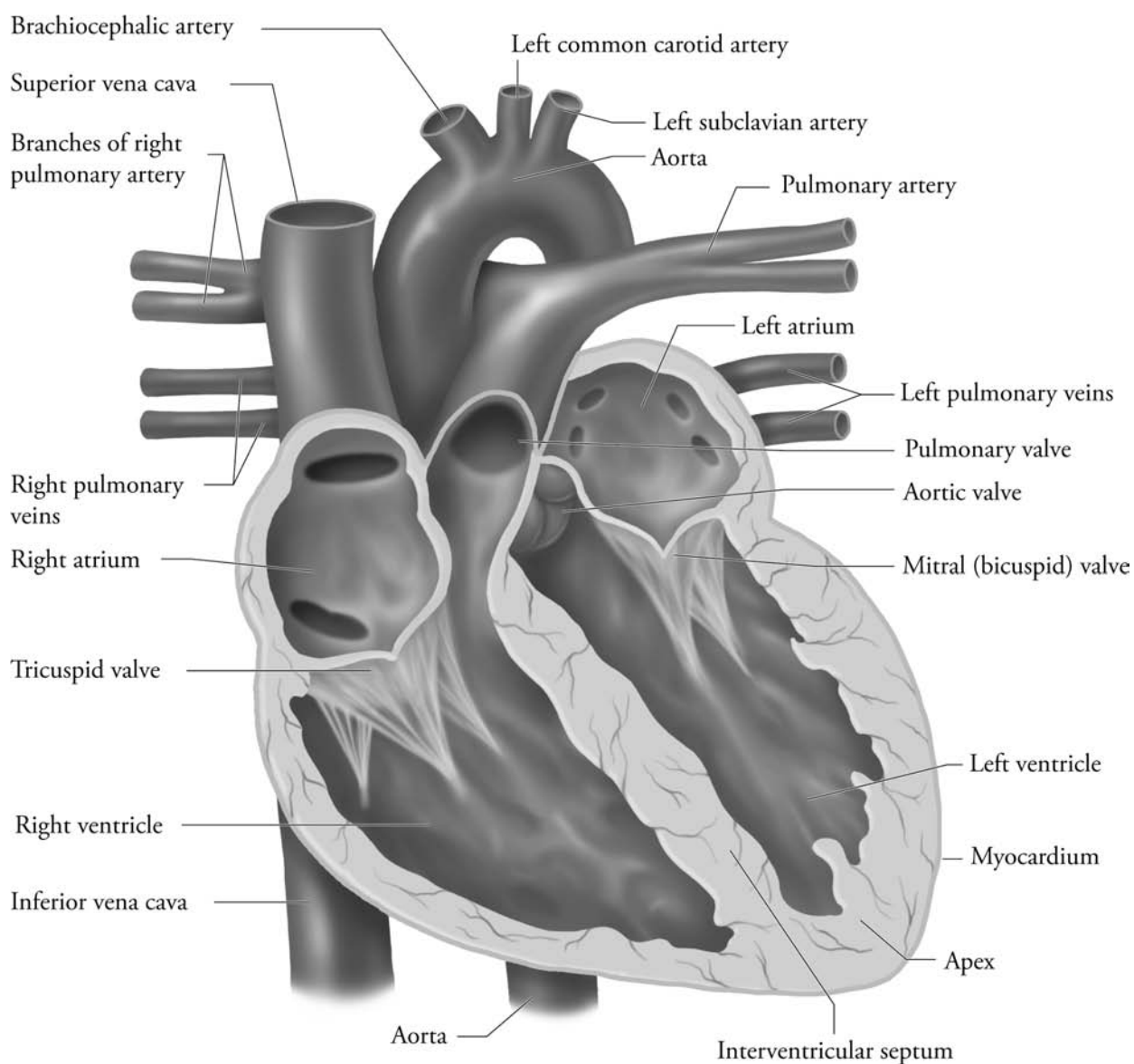
Drug List and Tables of Normal Values accessible only in PDF format on CCPE's website at: www.ccpe-cfpc.org

Introduction

Introduction

The heart is a hollow, muscular organ that pumps blood into the blood vessels. It is a four-chamber pump made up of two atria and two ventricles. The atria move blood into the ventricles. Contraction of the ventricles provides the force to deliver blood through the lungs and the rest of the body. Four heart valves permit blood flow in only one direction, ensuring that the chambers work as co-ordinated independent pumps.

Figure i-1: Structure of the Heart



Introduction cont'd

Coronary arteries that originate from the aorta supply blood to cardiac tissue. The electrical conduction system of the heart helps to maintain the co-ordinated contractions of the atria and ventricles.

Cardiovascular disease encompasses a variety of conditions that affect the proper functioning of blood, blood vessels, or the heart. In this unit, we discuss some common heart disorders. Ischemic heart disease, commonly referred to as angina, involves inadequate delivery of oxygen to the heart muscle.

Acute myocardial infarction is usually caused by the formation of a thrombus that completely blocks blood flow in a coronary artery, leading to death of myocardial cells. This is commonly called a heart attack.

Heart failure results when the heart is no longer able to deliver an adequate supply of oxygenated blood to the body. If insufficient oxygen reaches the body organs, acute circulatory failure (shock) results.

Altered cardiac function may also result from abnormalities of electrical conduction within the heart. Any alteration in the normal generation or conduction of electrical impulses in the heart is referred to as an arrhythmia.

Based on Statistics Canada's 2000-2001 Canadian Community Health Survey, it is estimated that among Canadians 12 years of age and older, 5.0% have heart disease, 2.1% have had a heart attack, 1.9% have angina and 1.0% have congestive heart failure. The prevalence of heart disease increases after 50 years of age, and is more common among men than among women. By 70 years of age, at least one in four men and one in five women report having experienced heart disease. (Can J Cardiol 2005; 21 (14): 1265-1271)

Unit Structure

This unit is divided into 5 modules:

Module 1: Ischemic Heart Disease (Angina Pectoris)

Module 2: Acute Coronary Syndrome

Module 3: Heart Failure

Module 4: Acute Circulatory Failure (Shock)

Module 5: Arrhythmias