

A Circulating Highway

The heart and blood vessels (veins and arteries) make up the circulatory system. The heart pumps blood that carries oxygen and nutrients to all parts of the body including the eyes, skin, bones, and teeth. The heart is the size of a fist and acts like a pump to circulate blood. Tell your carschoolers to put their hands over the center of their chest to feel their heart pumping (beating).

Veins and arteries are tubes of varying sizes that act like a highway system in the body, transporting blood to all of the body parts. The heart pumps blood through the lungs where it collects oxygen and then heads out through the arteries to deliver the oxygen-rich blood to the body. When the blood has delivered the oxygen, it is pumped back to the heart and lungs through the veins to get more. When blood is rich in oxygen, it is red. When it has little oxygen, it is blue. That's why veins are blue in color; they are returning oxygen-depleted blood to the heart and lungs.

Have your carschoolers look at the inside of their wrists to find their own circulating highways. They should be able to see some blue blood vessels near the surface of their skin. These are veins returning oxygen-poor blood to the heart and lungs.

Mighty Muscles

The muscular system includes all of the body's muscles that contract to move bones and body parts. Muscles are either voluntary or involuntary. You control voluntary muscles, and they move whenever you want them to. Involuntary muscles work automatically inside your body.

From the Information Highway

Melanin is a natural pigment that gives skin its special color. The darker someone's skin color is, the more melanin that person has. The lighter someone's skin color is, the less melanin the person has.