

## The Little Things You Do

Now you know that the circulatory system is responsible for carrying food, water, and oxygen to all of the body cells. It also has the responsibility of removing wastes from the body cells. While the circulatory system is busy doing both of those jobs, it is doing three more small chores as well.

### Maintaining Body Temperature

I have coached a basketball team. We practice in the fall, inside an old gym that does not have any air conditioning. The players and I get very warm. At the end of practice, if you look around the room, you see a lot of red faces and necks as well as bright pink arms and legs.

In the winter, we heat our home with a wood stove. We are gone most of the day, so the house is really cold when we get there at the end of the day. If you could see us watching TV before the room heats up, you would see some pale faces, white hands, and maybe even some blue lips!

Our bodies try to stay at just the right temperature. When we get too hot, tiny tubes, called **capillaries**, move up near the surface of our skin. As our blood moves through the capillaries, heat is released to the surface of our skin. The heat is then absorbed into the environment that surrounds us. We get a nice rosy glow when the blood vessels are so close to the surface.

When we are too cold, the tiny capillaries move down as far as they can into our bodies. The blood wants to stay as close as possible to our important organs. Without blood flowing near the surface, we look pale.

### Fighting Disease

From time to time, most of us get sick. Sometimes we have to see the doctor and get medicine to help us get better. Sometimes, we just seem to get healthy on our own. Our circulatory system has the important job of trying to keep us healthy by fighting off diseases and infections. When we talk about the different parts of the circulatory system in detail, we will get a better idea of how this job can be done.

### Carrying Chemicals

Finally, the circulatory system is responsible for delivering chemicals to different parts of the body when they are needed. Sometimes the chemicals are in the food we have been eating, the liquids we have been drinking, or the medicines we have swallowed. The circulatory system adds the chemicals to its load when it is delivering food, water, and oxygen.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions

1. Why do kids get red in the face when they have been running around a lot?

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2. Why do your hands get lighter colored when they are cold?

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3. Why is it important to wear the right kind of clothes for the weather?

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4. If you are not feeling well, how can you get better without taking medicine?

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5. Sometimes when we are sick, we need medicine to help us get well. Why?

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6. Eating the right kinds of food is important for a healthy body. You need vitamins and minerals. How do the vitamins and minerals get to the right parts of your body?

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7. Milk has lots of calcium in it. Calcium is important for many parts of your body. How does the calcium get where it is needed?

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8. When you are sick and you need medicine to help you get better, how does the circulatory system help out?

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