

# Youth Health Bulletin



**FEBRUARY 2016**

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: MATTERS OF THE HEART

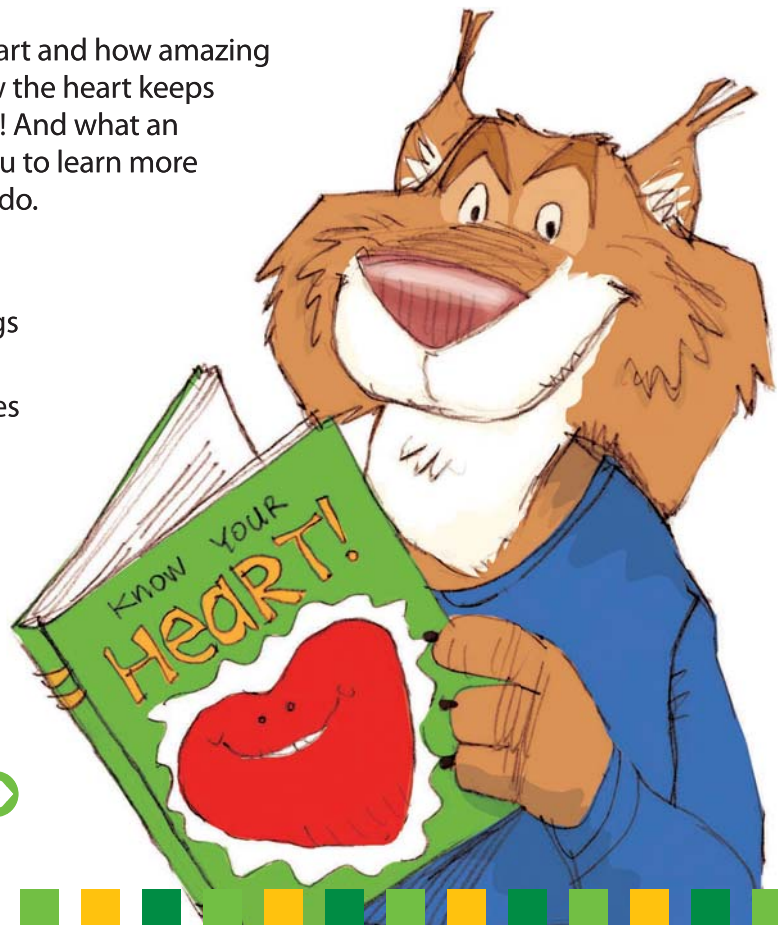
**W**ally Cat was thinking about his heart and how amazing it is! Have you ever wondered how the heart keeps beating all the time? How big it must be! And what an important job it has! Wally Cat wants you to learn more about all the amazing things our hearts do.

### Heart facts

Here are some of the awesome things a heart does:

- The heart usually beats 60-100 times per minute, but can go faster.
- There are approximately 100,000 heartbeats a day. That equals more than 30 million times per year.
- Every minute the heart pumps about 1.5 gallons of blood.
- The size of your heart is about the size of your fist.

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# Remember, your heart is a muscle and like many other muscles in your body, being active keeps it strong.

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The heart is one busy muscle! Its main job is to pump blood so that it flows throughout the body. The heart gets messages from the body that tell it to pump more blood or pump less blood to meet the needs of the body. Your heart beats faster when you are being active or you get very scared. It beats slower at night when you are sleeping.

## What about the heart beat?

Although your heart's job is to pump blood all over the body, there are actually two pumps inside of your heart. The right side of the heart takes in the blood from the body and pumps it to the lungs. The left side of the heart does the opposite. The left side takes in blood from the lungs and pumps it out to the rest of the body. Before each beat you feel, the heart fills with blood. The beat is the muscle pulling tightly, which then pushes the blood out.

If you want to find out how fast your heart is beating, use a watch with a second hand and count how many beats you feel in one minute. Two places that are good for feeling your heart beat are on the side of your neck or on the inside part of your wrist,



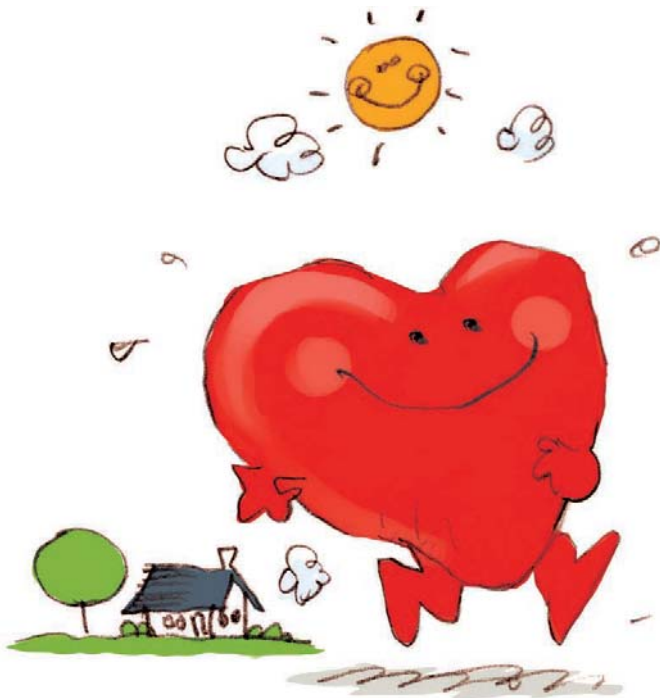
just below the thumb. Make sure you are sitting down and if you have been running around you may want to take a minute or two to rest before checking your heart rate. When you are resting, you will probably feel between 60 and 100 beats per minute.

## Keeping a happy, healthy heart

Remember, your heart is a muscle and like many other muscles in your body, being active keeps it strong. Make sure to stay active. Make sure to eat many different fruits and vegetables. Try to stay away from soft drinks. Wally Cat knows how important his heart is and works to keep it happy and healthy every day. He knows that you can too!

### SOURCE:

Nemours KidsHealth (2013). Your Heart & Circulatory System. Accessed from: <http://kidshealth.org/kid/htbw/heart.html>



Youth  
Health Bulletin

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