

CIRCULATORY SYSTEM VESSELS

Anatomy Reference Chart

Vessel Type	Function & Direction	Structural Characteristics
Arteries	Away from Heart Carries oxygenated blood (except pulmonary artery) at high pressure.	Thick elastic walls; narrow lumen; no valves; deep-seated in tissues.
Arterioles	Distribution Small branches of arteries that lead to capillaries.	Thin muscular walls; primary site of vascular resistance.
Capillaries	Exchange Site of gas, nutrient, and waste exchange with tissues.	Wall is a single layer of endothelial cells; extremely narrow lumen.
Venules	Collection Small vessels that gather blood from capillaries.	Thin walls; merge to form larger veins.
Veins	To the Heart Carries deoxygenated blood (except pulmonary vein) at low pressure.	Thin walls; wide lumen; contain valves to prevent backflow.

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