

Dextrocardia

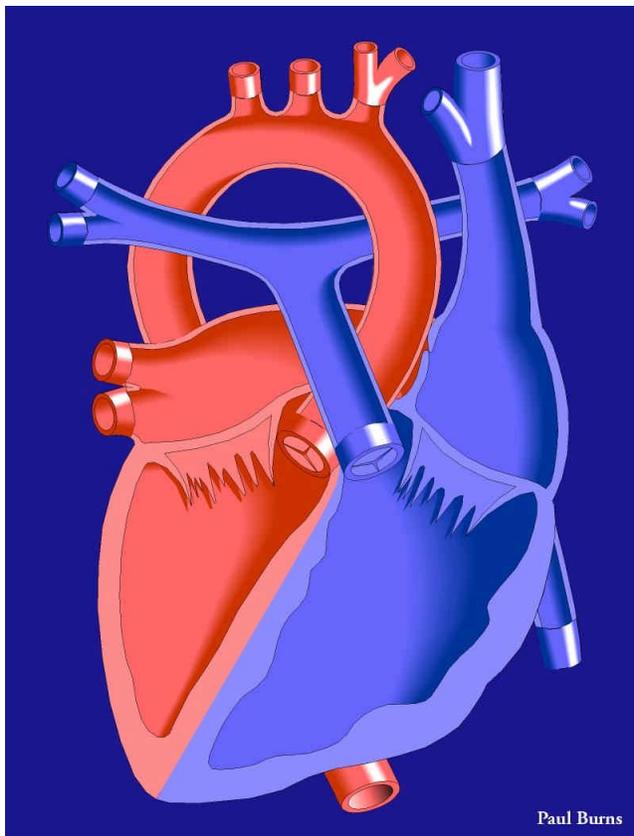


What Is It?

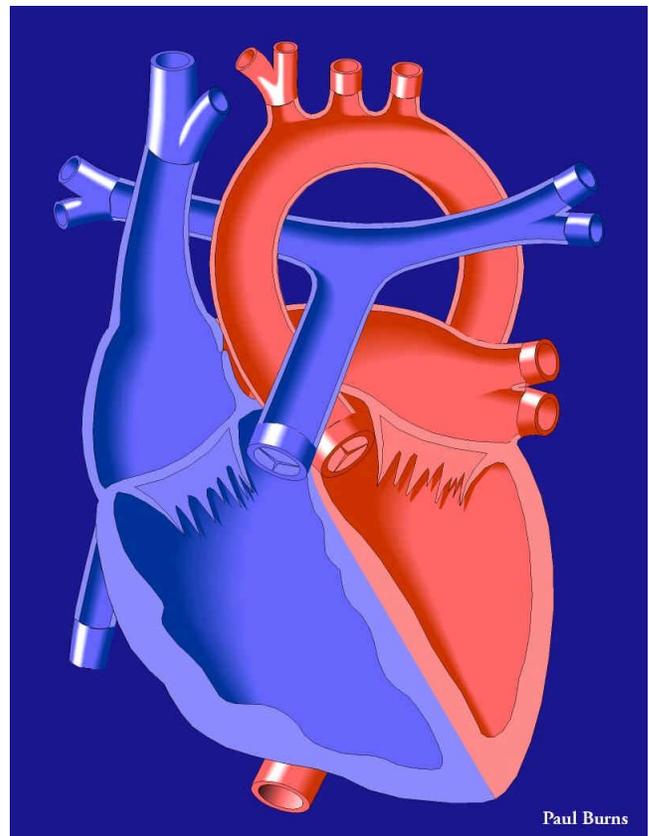
The term Dextrocardia means that the heart is in the right chest (dextro means right in Latin) rather than in the left chest, as is the usual case.

There are various forms of dextrocardia, ranging from a normally configured heart that is positioned further to the right than normal to so-called "mirror-image dextrocardia," in which the positions of the heart chambers and major vessels are exactly the reverse of the "normal" arrangement. (see diagram) Chest xrays and an ECG (echocardiogram) may be used to determine which type of dextrocardia is present.

Dextrocardia is a rare condition and occurs with equal frequency in males and females.



Dextrocardia



Normal Heart

What Are Its Effects?

If the heart chambers are normally configured or form a perfect "mirror image" of the normal heart, there may be no adverse symptoms and no treatment is required. However, some forms of dextrocardia involve defects in the heart's structure that may require treatment with medications or surgery to correct. Also, the heart may be located in the right chest because of abnormalities of the lungs or chest which may cause problems and require treatment.

