

Blood Vessels of Lower Body

Major Systemic Arteries of the Lower Body

Major branches of the descending aorta serve the abdominal organs and the lower limbs.

- The celiac trunk is an unpaired artery that subdivides into three branches: the left gastric artery supplying the stomach, the splenic artery supplying the spleen, and the common hepatic artery.
- The largest branch of the abdominal aorta, the superior mesenteric artery supplies most of the small intestine via the intestinal arteries.

You should know the bodily locations, branching patterns, and body region supplied by the following arteries:

- Renal artery R+L
- Gonadal artery R+L (ovarian and testicular)
- Inferior mesenteric artery
- Lumbar arteries (4 pairs R+L)
- Common iliac artery R+L
- External iliac artery R+L
- Femoral artery R+L
- Deep femoral artery
- Internal iliac artery R+L

Major Systemic Veins of the Lower Body

Veins draining the lower body empty into the inferior vena cava.

- The inferior vena cava is much longer than the superior vena cava. It returns blood to the heart from all of the body regions below the diaphragm. It begins in the lower abdominal region with the union of the paired common iliac veins. These veins drain venous blood from the legs and pelvis.

You should know the bodily locations, branching patterns, and body region drained by the following veins:

- Internal iliac vein R+L
- Femoral vein R+L
- Great saphenous vein R+L
- Lumbar veins (several pairs R+L)
- Gonadal veins R+L
- Renal veins R+L
- Hepatic veins R+L
- Hepatic portal vein
- Inferior mesenteric vein

- Splenic vein
- Superior mesenteric vein

Hepatic Portal Circulation

The blood vessels of the hepatic portal circulation system drain the digestive viscera, spleen and pancreas. This blood is delivered to the liver for processing by the hepatic portal vein.

- The inferior mesenteric vein drains the distal portions of the large intestine and joins the splenic vein that drains the spleen and part of the pancreas and stomach.
- The splenic vein and the superior mesenteric vein (receives blood from the small intestine and the ascending and transverse colon) join to form the hepatic portal vein.
- The left gastric vein drains the lesser curvature of the stomach directly into the hepatic portal vein.