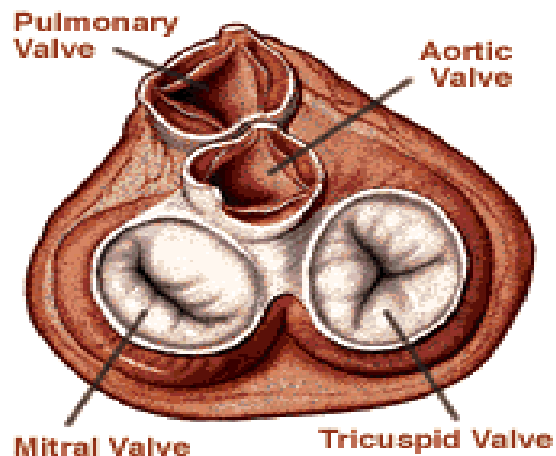


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The **atrioventricular valves** (mitral and tricuspid) are located between the atria and the ventricles.

- The **tricuspid** valve is located between the right atrium and right ventricle. It is named for its three leaflets or cusps. As the right atrium contracts, the blood pushes the tricuspid valve open. Subsequently, as the right ventricle contracts, the tricuspid valve is forced back into a closed position, thus preventing blood from flowing backward into the atrium.
- The **mitral** valve is located between the left atrium and left ventricle. The mitral valve is also known as the bicuspid valve because it has two leaflets or cusps. As the left atrium contracts, the blood pushes the mitral valve open. Subsequently, as the left ventricle contracts, the mitral valve is forced back into a closed position, thus preventing blood from flowing backward into the atrium.

The **semilunar valves** (aortic and pulmonary) are located between each ventricle and its corresponding artery. They are named for their half-moon (semi-lunar) shape.

- The **pulmonary** valve is located between the right ventricle and the pulmonary artery. When the right ventricle contracts, the pulmonary valve is pushed open, and blood flows into the pulmonary artery. When the right ventricle relaxes, the pressure of the blood in the pulmonary artery forces the valve back into a closed position and prevents back-flow of blood into the ventricle.
- The **aortic** valve is located between the left ventricle and the aorta. When the left ventricle contracts, the aortic valve is pushed open, and blood flows into the aorta. When the left ventricle relaxes, the pressure of the blood in the aorta forces the valve back into a closed position and prevents back-flow of blood into the ventricle.