Cardiac output is typically 5 liters/min at rest. If the left ventricle contracts 70 times per minute and ejects 70 ml of blood across the aortic valve with each stroke, then the heart delivers a pulsatile volume flow rate of 5 L/min. The kidneys receive 20% of this volume, about 1 L/min.

As each renal artery enters the kidney it branches into segmental arteries, then arterioles, ultimately delivering flow to over 1,000,000,000 nephrons in each kidney. Each renal arteriole terminates in a tuft of capillaries in a structure known as a glomerulus.

The external links on the *glomerulus* webpage give understanding to the importance of the kidneys, which receive 1/5 of the total systemic arterial flow.