

HeartKids

ABOUT
RHEUMATIC
HEART
DISEASE
(RHD)

Acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease

Acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease are illnesses that can damage the heart valves. The good news is they can be prevented and managed with the right care and treatment.

Acute rheumatic fever (ARF) is an illness that may happen after a person gets an infection from Group A Streptococcus bacteria (Strep A).



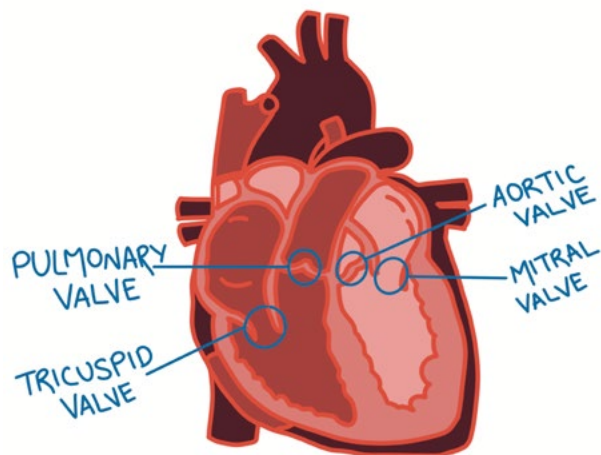
If a Strep A infection (typically a throat infection such as tonsilitis, or a skin infection) is not treated it can cause long term damage.

Signs of ARF include fever, joint pain, rashes and jerky movements. If someone has any of these signs they need to go to the clinic to see the doctor, nurse or health worker.

Rheumatic heart disease (RHD) is the long-term damage to one or more of the heart valves, caused by repeated, untreated or severe episodes of ARF.

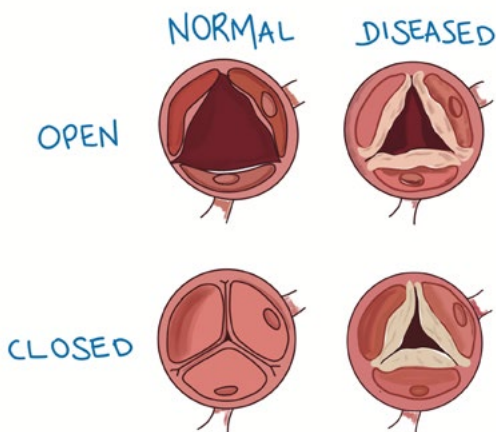
This damage can make it harder for the heart to pump blood properly and can lead to serious health problems that might need open heart surgery. Regular medical care and ongoing treatment are important to help prevent further damage.

How the heart works



A heart has four valves in it. These valves act like one-way doors. The doors make sure blood in the heart moves through the heart in the right direction.

The valves are like doors in the heart. When they get stretched or scarred, they don't open and close properly.





Diagnosing RHD

RHD is diagnosed using an echocardiogram (ultrasound of the heart). This test shows how well the heart and valves are working.

Bicillin Treatment

A bicillin injection is a strong medicine (antibiotic) that helps protect the body from letting the Strep A germ back in - the one that causes ARF. If someone has rheumatic heart disease (RHD), they need a needle every 21-28 days.

Even if someone with RHD feels fine, it's very important that the needle needs to be taken on time every 21-28 days, as the medicine needs to stay in the body all the time to keep working.

People with RHD need to have regular check ups with doctors and the dentist and will receive special care when pregnant - to help them live a long, normal and happy life.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
CONTACT HEARTKIDS**

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