



# RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE (RHD)



**>55 MILLION**  
people are living  
with RHD



**350,000**  
people are killed  
by RHD every year



**95%**  
of cases  
occur in  
low- and  
middle-  
income  
countries

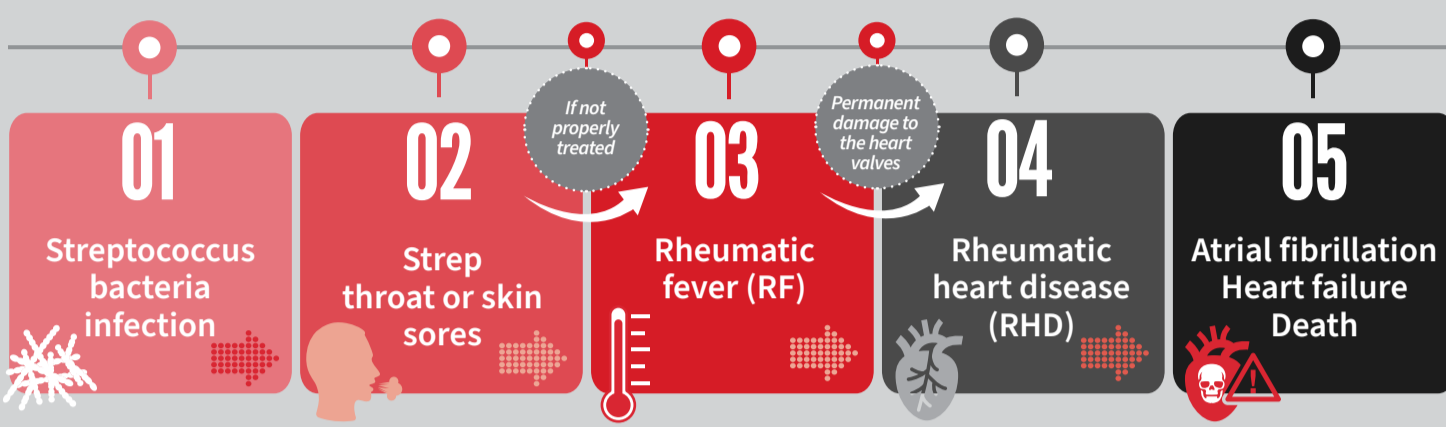
## ♥ Rheumatic fever ♥

is caused by an abnormal response of the body to infection with streptococcal bacteria, which usually begins as a sore throat or tonsillitis in children.

## ♥ Rheumatic heart disease ♥

is a life-threatening heart condition which results from damage to heart valves caused by one or several episodes of rheumatic fever.

## FROM SORE THROAT TO HEART FAILURE



## WHO'S AT RISK?

Children who suffer **repeated strep throat or skin infections**

Children and adolescents **living in low-income countries**  
(though RHD can occur at any age)



People living in areas where **poverty and overcrowding are common** are particularly at risk




People living in certain **indigenous communities**

People who have emigrated from **countries where rheumatic fever is more common**

RHD is the most commonly acquired heart disease in people aged **25 AND YOUNGER**  
In low- and middle-income countries

**80%** of the world's children live in countries where RHD is endemic



Most people who die of RHD are under **40 YEARS OF AGE**

*A greater risk of rheumatic fever is associated with overcrowding, poor sanitation and other conditions that can easily result in the rapid transmission or multiple exposures to strep bacteria.*

## SYMPTOMS



### RHEUMATIC FEVER

- Fever
- Swollen, tender, red and painful joints
- Pain that migrates from one joint to another
- Small bumps beneath the skin
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath and chest discomfort
- Flat or slightly raised rash, usually on the chest, back, and abdomen
- Uncontrolled movements of arms, legs, or facial muscles.

### RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE

- Heart murmur
- Chest pain
- Breathlessness with physical activity or when lying down
- Weakness and tiredness
- Swelling of the legs and face.

*Symptoms of RHD may not be noticed for many years. When they do develop, symptoms depend on which heart valves are affected and the type and severity of the damage.*




## PREVENTION



Prevent strep throat and skin infections

Treat infections with antibiotics (such as penicillin) to prevent rheumatic fever




Prevent additional streptococcal infection

Long-term antibiotics can reduce progression to more severe disease




## TREATMENT

