RHEUMATIC HEART DISEASE (RHD)

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
- People living in certain indigenous communities
- People who have emigrated from countries where rheumatic fever is more common

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.

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.

RHEUMATIC FEVER
- Fever
- Tender, swollen joints
- Pain that migrates from one joint to another
- Small lumps beneath the skin
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath and chest discomfort
- 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.

SYMPTOMS

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

- Medicines to manage heart failure may be needed
- In severe cases, treatment may include surgery to repair or replace a badly damaged valve


info@worldheart.org
www.worldheart.org

World Heart Federation
worldheartfed
worldheartfederation

>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

FROM SORE THROAT TO HEART FAILURE

01

Streptococcal infection

02

Sore throat or skin sore

03

Rheumatic fever (RF)

04

Rheumatic heart disease (RHD)

05

Artificial valve replacement heart failure treatment

In low- and middle-income countries

80% of the world’s children and adolescents

80% of the world’s children and adolescents

most people who die of RHD are under 40 years of age

25% and younger

% of people in low- and middle-income countries

350,000 people are killed by RHD every year