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## Membership and support across NZ

Heart Kids is here for everyone affected by Childhood Heart Disease (CHD), including Rheumatic Heart Disease. By joining Heart Kids, you will receive essential support and helpful resources. Most importantly, you will never have to face the challenges of your child's heart journey alone.

Join Heart Kids today for access to resources and information, support from our Family Support Workers both in the hospital and in your local area, opportunities for your heart kid to come to specialised camps and events and connections with other families facing similar challenges.

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## Join Heart Kids today to receive:

- Access to information and resources, including books and publications written by parents and medical professionals
- Direct practical, emotional and social support from a team of Family Support Workers, through face-to-face home visits and phone calls
- Pre-natal support for expectant parents facing big changes, challenges and decisions
- Help to build support networks and resilience
- Connections with other service providers in local regions
- Connections to other CHD families
- Access to CPR training
- Access to CoaguChek machines and MedicAlert bracelets for children who need them
- Access to camps for heart kids
- Free lifelong membership

\*NB: all services provided are subject to the availability of funds  
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### For further information:

[www.heartkids.org.nz](http://www.heartkids.org.nz)  
[www.facebook.com/heartkidsnz](https://www.facebook.com/heartkidsnz)  
0800 543 943  
[info@heartnz.org.nz](mailto:info@heartnz.org.nz)



# HeartKids

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## Rheumatic Heart Disease

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### Supporting heart kids through life

Important information regarding Rheumatic Heart Disease and Rheumatic Fever

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## Rheumatic Fever

Rheumatic Fever (RF) is an inflammatory disease that can develop from an untreated bacterial throat infection commonly known as *strep throat (streptococcal pharyngitis)*.

It takes from 1-5 weeks after the strep symptoms have gone for Acute RF to appear, usually in children between the ages of 5 and 15. Symptoms can include high fever, carditis (inflammation of the heart or its linings) and can persist for months.

They may reoccur at a later time if the strep throat reoccurs. The most potentially serious affect of Acute RF is the progressive damage it can cause to the heart, especially to the heart valves - known as Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD).

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## What is the difference between RF and RHD?

**Rheumatic Fever** - Short-term inflammation caused by group A Streptococcus bacteria. Affects the heart, joints, brain and skin.

**Rheumatic Heart Disease** - Occurs when the Rheumatic Fever inflammation causes permanent damage to the heart.

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## What are the lifestyle changes that may occur?

Treatment of a patient with Acute RF starts with eradicating the streptococcus from the site of infection with appropriate antibiotics. The inflammation of RF may be effectively treated with aspirin or other anti-inflammatory medications. In addition, steroids may be prescribed. Bed rest may be recommended for the duration of the illness.

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## Lifestyle Information



Group A Strep can live in your throat, so remember to keep brushing your teeth every day.



Be active and healthy. You may tire more easily. Contact and competitive sport can increase strain on your heart. Consult your doctor before participating.



Rest as directed by your medical specialist.



Healthy eating is important especially when you can't do as much exercise.



Be sure to stay in contact and communicate with friends and family.



Regular penicillin injections may be required for 10 years to treat and prevent Rheumatic Fever infections.



Surgery may be required to repair and replace heart valves when damage is impairing heart function.



Be aware, having RHD does not prevent you from getting another RF infection.

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## Find the Rheumatic Heart Disease Words

M S C O U N P T T W  
X I A U M O Y L V W  
J X R T L I G T U K  
B A D P P T S M P G  
T L I U C A W A A A  
I Y O T Z T Z A E N  
N H J T S I U M D T  
S P M G B G D N I I  
U O T H M R K H A C  
F R Y U W U C G T O  
F P Z J U G E R R A  
I I Y S I E S Z I G  
C M T K E R J U C U  
I S T E N O S I S L  
E E L C S U M G B A  
N R F E E V L A V N  
C Y G A N U B U V T  
Y V E N T R I C L E  
G Z N N Y U K D G K  
F X W N P Z Z D Y T

- /// Ventricle
- /// Valve
- /// Regurgitation
- /// Stenosis
- /// Cardio
- /// Anticoagulant
- /// Paediatric
- /// Prophylaxis
- /// Insufficiency
- /// Muscle
- /// Output