



Preventing Rheumatic Fever

Steps of rheumatic fever

Kids tell your parents or an adult if you have a sore throat



Adults look for the signs of a sore throat

- hard to swallow
- trouble eating or drinking

Sore throat

Sore throat checked

Go to doctor or nurse straight away to get every sore throat checked.



Sore throat is 'strep throat' (caused by bacterial infection or bug called Group A Streptococcus).



'Strep throat' is treated - take antibiotics for 10 days. It's important to finish all the antibiotics.



Stops 'strep throat' and rheumatic fever.

Healthy and active with strong heart



Sore throats not checked

Don't go to the doctor or nurse to get sore throat checked, stay unwell.



Sore throat could be 'strep throat'.

'Strep throat' not treated with medicine (antibiotics).

Rheumatic fever could develop.

Get very sick from rheumatic fever - tiredness, sore and swollen joints (knees, elbows, ankles and wrists).

Unwell and tired with serious heart problems - rheumatic heart disease



Rheumatic fever and hearts

Rheumatic fever

If your child gets rheumatic fever, it may cause permanent damage to their heart valves. This is called rheumatic heart disease.

A heart valve acts like a one-way door. It makes sure that blood pumped by the heart flows in one direction only. When the heart valve is damaged it can leak and may:

- make it hard to breathe
- make your child feel tired all the time.



Your heart

The heart muscle is special as it pumps blood around your body. The blood provides your body with oxygen and nutrients. If something is wrong with your heart it can affect other parts of your body. This is why it's important to look after your heart.

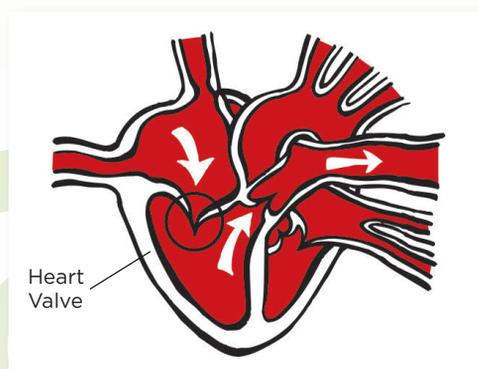


Illustration courtesy of the Heart Foundation NZ.

How does my heart work?

Your heart is located under the ribcage in the centre of your chest between your right and left lungs.

Its muscular walls beat, or contract, continuously. This pumps blood to all parts of your body.

A normal, healthy adult heart is generally the size of a clenched adult fist. However, some diseases of the heart can cause it to become larger.



**STOP
SORE THROATS
HURTING HEARTS**

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