

South Australian Rheumatic Heart Disease Register

For patients and families

Rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease (RHD) are big problems for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and for some other people who come to Australia from other countries.

Rheumatic fever is caused by a bug, called Strep, which gets into the body through skin sores and sore throats.

We can get rid of Strep by washing our hands and bodies, by using tissues when we cough and sneeze, and by cleaning our teeth.

Rheumatic fever can cause long term damage to the heart known as rheumatic heart disease.

It's important to go to the clinic if you have:

- ✓ skin sores
- ✓ a sore throat
- ✓ pain in the joints
- ✓ fever (feeling hot and cold)

If you have rheumatic fever or rheumatic heart disease, penicillin needles every 3-4 weeks can stop it from getting worse.

What is the RHD Register?

- > The Register is a list of all people with rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease.
- > Everyone in South Australia with rheumatic fever and/or rheumatic heart disease will be put on the register, unless they tell us otherwise.
- > The register helps the health clinics know when people need their needles and when they need to see a heart doctor.
- > There are similar registers in other states and territories.

What information is on the RHD Register?

- > Your name, your date of birth, your community
- > The dates you were sick with rheumatic fever or rheumatic heart disease
- > When you had your last penicillin needle
- > When and where you see the doctor about this illness
- > Any heart tests or operations you have had or may have in the future



The RHD Register is used by:

- > Staff who work in the RHD Program
- > Community clinics (to remind individuals about their needles and heart health care appointments).
- > Heart specialists, including doctors from South Australia or Northern Territory, or other doctors who see you for your rheumatic heart disease.
- > Hospital staff who are involved in your direct care if you are admitted to hospital.
- > Dentists who need to see you. It is very important that people with rheumatic heart have a good healthy mouth and teeth because this can affect the heart.

Who else can see the information?

- > If you go to another State or Territory, your information may be given to the register in that State. The information is passed on so they can also help to look after you.
- > The State Government and Australian Government collect information about the number of people who have rheumatic fever or rheumatic heart disease. This is to understand how much of a problem these illnesses are. This information does not contain any personal details.

How long will my name be on the RHD Register?

- > Your name and information will stay on the register unless you ask for it to be taken off.

Do I have to have my name and information on the RHD Register?

- > **No.** If you do not want your name on the register, tell your clinic, or email the RHD Register (see below) with your name and birth date.

For more information contact the SA Rheumatic Heart Disease Program

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For more information about Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Disease, visit

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/rhd or www.rhdaustralia.org.au

