

Attention: Queensland Clinicians

THINK Acute Rheumatic Fever



ARF can lead to rheumatic heart disease, disability, open heart surgery and death, especially when recurrent episodes occur. ARF and RHD are prevalent in children and young adults in Queensland. They are caused by Strep A (*Streptococcus pyogenes*) infection of the throat and skin.



AT HIGH RISK:

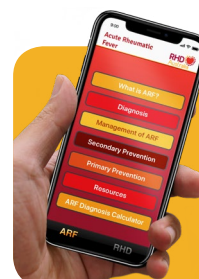
Aboriginal and **Torres Strait Islander** children and young adults are at high risk, but also consider the diagnosis in other population groups including **Migrants, Refugees** and **Pacific Islanders**.

Skin and throat infections in children at high risk SHOULD BE TREATED WITH IM PENICILLIN (or Trimethoprim/Sulfamethoxazole an alternative for skin sores) - see the PCCM and the Health Pathways for your area.

The management of pharyngitis and skin sores is different **in people at high risk of ARF**. The clinical decision rules to differentiate between viral and bacterial pharyngitis do not apply in communities with very high rates of Streptococcal infection.

Many cases of ARF are initially missed, since **early symptoms can be subtle**. They may comprise one or more of:

- **FEVER**
- **JOINT PAIN**
- **LIMPING**
- **TWITCHING MOVEMENTS (SYDENHAM'S CHOREA)**
- **HEART MURMUR**



Download the free Guidelines app with ARF Diagnosis Calculator

If these symptoms are present, do:

- Electrocardiogram (ECG)
- Bloods (FBC/FBE, ESR, CRP, ASOT, antiDNase B)
- Blood cultures if febrile
- Throat/skin sore swab (preferably before giving antibiotics) culture for Strep A
- Give benzathine penicillin G injection or if not available commence oral antibiotics
- Contact on call Paediatrician, Cardiologist or adult Physician to expedite your patient's admission for ongoing evaluation to determine diagnosis of ARF and echocardiography
- Contact the QLD RHD Register for education and advice about ARF and RHD, notifications, and follow-up

All suspected or confirmed cases of ARF need to be admitted to hospital for echocardiography and assessment of evolving symptoms.

ARF and RHD are both NOTIFIABLE conditions in Queensland
REPORT ALL SUSPECTED AND CONFIRMED CASES TO QLD RHD PROGRAM

Email **ArfRhdRegister@health.qld.gov.au**

Phone **1300 135 854**

Fax **1300 429 536**



References:

- RHD Australia (ARF/RHD writing group), National Heart Foundation of Australia and the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand. Australian guideline for prevention, diagnosis and management of acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease (2nd edition). 2012 www.rhdaustralia.org.au
- Healthpathways <https://fnq.healthpathwayscommunity.org>
- eTGcomplete <https://tgldcdp.tg.org.au/etgAccess>
- Primary Clinical Care Manual (PCCM) 9th edition