

# CDRS

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE FACT SHEET RHEUMATIC FEVER

Communicable Disease Reporting System

Rheumatic fever is an inflammatory disease that develops after an infection with Streptococcus bacteria as in inadequately treated strep throat or scarlet fever.

### Symptoms

- Usually occur 1-5 symptom-free weeks after the strep infection and may have a sudden onset.
- Early symptoms include fever, joint pain, nose bleeds, abdominal pain, and vomiting.
- The disease progresses to include heart problems (carditis), joint pain and swelling (polyarthritis), muscle weakness and jerky movement, subcutaneous nodules, and skin rash (erythema marginatum).

### Transmission

- Rheumatic fever is not contagious, although strep infections are (see streptococcus references)

### Treatment

- Antibiotics may be used to eradicate strep infections.
- Rheumatic fever is treated symptomatically. Treatment goals are to decrease inflammation and fever, and to control cardiac failure.

### Prevention

- To prevent Rheumatic fever, infections by Streptococcus must be prevented and properly treated.
- Avoid close contact with persons who have strep throat or scarlet fever, practice good hand washing, and take antibiotics as directed.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.

Franklin County



Board of Health

Report Disease With Ease - 24 hours a day

[www.cdrsinfo.com](http://www.cdrsinfo.com)

Columbus and Franklin County Communicable Disease Reporting System

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