

## Glossary for Rheumatic Heart Disease

- **Antibodies:** antibodies are special proteins that are part of the body's immune system. White blood cells make antibodies to neutralize harmful germs, or other foreign substances, called antigens. Antibodies are "good guys" that fight inside your body, protecting you from "bad guys" like bacteria and viruses.
- **Anti-inflammatory medications:** substances that reduces inflammation. Anti-inflammatory drugs ease pain by reducing inflammation.
- **Aortic valve:** a valve between the left ventricle and the aorta; prevents blood from flowing from the aorta back into the heart.
- **Arthritis:** a disease of the joints characterized by inflammation, pain, stiffness, and redness.
- **Aschoff bodies:** nodules under the skin.
- **Atrial fibrillation:** an irregular heartbeat in which the upper chambers of the heart (the atria) beat inconsistently and rapidly.
- **Autoimmune disorder:** a condition that occurs when the immune system mistakenly attacks and destroys healthy body tissue.
- **Bacteria:** a tiny, single-celled microorganism, sometimes called a germ; some bacteria can cause disease.
- **Carditis:** inflammation of the heart.
- **Chronic heart disease:** generally described as a non-reversible alteration in heart structure or function which typically requires intervention by health professionals.
- **Chronic illnesses:** a disorder that continues for a long period of time.
- **Contagious:** a disease Spread from one person or organism to another by direct or indirect contact.
- **Diabetes:** a common form of diabetes in which the body cannot properly store or use glucose (sugar), the body's main source of energy. This describes *diabetes mellitus*, the most common form of diabetes.
- **Hemorrhagic stroke:** strokes which result from rupture of a blood vessel or an abnormal vascular structure.
- **Erythema marginatum:** a rash with a snake-like appearance and distinct red borders or margins.
- **Heart failure:** a condition in which the heart cannot pump out all of the blood that enters it.
- **Immune system:** a system of biological structures and processes within an organism that protects it against disease.
- **Inflammation:** a localized protective reaction of tissue to irritation, injury, or infection, characterized by pain, redness, swelling, and sometimes loss of function.
- **Ischemic stroke:** occurs when an artery to the brain is blocked.
- **Left atrium:** receives oxygenated blood from the pulmonary veins, and pumps it into the left ventricle, via the mitral valve.
- **Left ventricle:** the chamber on the left side of the heart that receives arterial blood from the left atrium and pumps it into the aorta.
- **Mitral valve:** the valve between the left atrium and the left ventricle of the heart.
- **Penicillin:** an antibiotic which helps eliminate strep bacteria from the body.
- **Prophylaxis:** a measure taken to prevent a disease or condition.
- **Pulmonary valve:** sometimes called the pulmonic valve. It is the valve of the heart that lies between the right ventricle and the pulmonary artery.
- **Rheumatic fever:** an inflammatory disease that occurs following an infection with the strep bacteria.
- **Rheumatic heart disease:** a condition in which permanent damage to heart valves is caused by rheumatic fever.
- **Right atrium:** the right upper chamber of the heart. It receives deoxygenated blood from the body and pumps it into the right ventricle which then sends it to the lungs to be oxygenated.
- **Right ventricle:** the lower right chamber of the heart that receives deoxygenated blood from the right atrium and pumps it under low pressure into the lungs (by way of the pulmonary artery).
- **Sore throat:** a pain in the throat and that can be caused by many factors including inflammation of the larynx, pharynx, or tonsils.

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- **Steroids:** a general class of chemical substances that include many hormones and drugs. The term steroid may carry many meanings. For instance, it may refer to drugs that help reduce swelling, pain, and other symptoms of inflammation. The male hormone testosterone is a steroid that can be used to build up muscles. Cholesterol is yet another steroid.
- **Strep throat:** an infection of the throat caused by the streptococcal (strep) bacteria.
- **Streptococcus bacteria:** the name of the bacteria that cause strep throat.
- **Sydenham's chorea:** abnormal movements of the face and arms.
- **Tricuspid valve:** a three-flapped valve on the right side of the heart, between the right atrium and the right ventricle, which stops the backflow of blood between the two.
- **Virus:** a small infectious agent that can reproduce only inside the living cells of organisms.