

Croup

Weight (Kg):

What is Croup?

Croup is a viral infection of the wind pipe (trachea) and vocal cords (larynx) that commonly affects children younger than 5 years old.

The noise can be very frightening and in most cases croup sounds worse than it actually is. However, in some cases children may become very tired from the extra work it takes to breathe. In very severe cases, a child's breathing can become obstructed, or blocked.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Stridor. When your child breathes in, you hear a harsh, high pitched sound. This gets worse with crying or coughing.
- Barking cough. The child may sound like a dog or seal.
- Hoarse voice.
- Cold symptoms: fever, runny nose, irritability, decreased appetite.

******Croup is often worse at night, or when your child is upset, or when your child is lying flat.******

How is croup spread?

Your child may get croup by coming into contact with another person with the virus. It is spread through coughing, sneezing, or contact with the mucous (on tissues, hands or toys).

How long will it last?

Croup is almost always worse at night. The second night of the illness is usually the worst and the entire illness may last a total of 5-6 days.

What should I do?

1. Remain calm and keep your child calm. Getting upset can make the symptoms worse.
2. Let your child breathe in cool air (bundle them up and take them outside or near an open window or use a cool-mist humidifier).
3. Give plenty of clear fluids.
4. Give acetaminophen (Tylenol, Tempra, etc.) or Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) for fever or discomfort.

Royal University Hospital
Children's Emergency Department

Affix patient label here

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Call 911 Immediately if:

1. Your child has blue lips or fingernails.
2. Your child appears exhausted.
3. Your child has passed out (unconscious).
4. Your child stops breathing.

Go to an Emergency Department if:

1. Your child does not improve after 15 minutes of cool air.
2. Your child's breathing becomes difficult (when not coughing).
3. Your child starts drooling or having a lot of trouble swallowing.
4. Your child has stridor when breathing without crying or exertion and it doesn't improve with cold air.

Can Croup be treated?

In the emergency department, croup is treated with several types of medications:

Relievers: A single dose of steroid that your child can drink. If your child is unable to drink, it can be given through and intravenous line or into their muscle like a vaccine.

If your child is struggling to breath, they may receive a breathing treatment that helps to shrink the swelling in their wind pipe. Your child will need to be observed for several hours after receiving this medication.

Controllers: There are no medications that control croup, but some children may need to take another dose of steroid the following day.

Antibiotics: No. Croup is caused by a virus, and cannot be cured with antibiotics.

If you have other questions or concerns call your doctors office or HealthLine at:

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