

CROUP

Croup - A viral respiratory infection that can cause severe breathing trouble in children especially the very young. There is no cure for this infection – symptoms are treated with supportive measures until they resolve.

Symptoms:

- Tight, low pitched barking cough (seal-like bark) - tends to be worse at night.
- Voice or cry is hoarse-sounding.
- Child may have **stridor** – crowing or gasping-like noise when child breathes **in** as croup becomes worse.
- Symptoms tend to increase in the evening and can last up to 5-6 days.
- Associated symptoms include fever or nasal congestion.

Treatment:

Croup without stridor

- Cool mist vaporizer at night.
- Increase daily fluid intake. Use warm fluids if having cough spasms to relax airways.
- Ibuprofen (for children > 6 mos) or Tylenol (for children < 6 mos.) if fever present – see dosing chart. Cold medicines or antibiotics do not cure the illness.

Croup with stridor

- Take child outside for 5-10 minutes into cold night air or have the child breathe in air from an open freezer.
- Foggy bathroom – turn on the hot water in the shower and close the bathroom door. Try to stay calm. If the child senses that a parent is anxious, the child's breathing can worsen. Bring the child into the foggy room to breathe the warm moist air for 10-15 minutes

Call the office immediately if.

- The above measures do not improve the difficulty breathing.
- Any bluish color is noted in the lips or skin.
- Severe respiratory distress is present at any point (retractions between or above the ribs, difficulty speaking)
- Stridor is noted even when the child is calm and resting.

Call during office hours if:

- Mild croup-like cough persists for more than 5 days or had significant difficulty with coughing the previous night

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