

Croup

Croup is an infection of the larynx (voice box). It causes swelling and irritation in the throat.

Croup usually happens in children from 3 months to 3 years old. It often happens when a child has a cold.

Croup usually lasts for up to 5 days and gets worse at night.

Croup is caused by a virus. This means antibiotics will not help. Cold, humid (moist air) air is the best treatment.

What are the symptoms?

- › Hoarseness (rough voice)
- › Noise when breathing in
- › Working hard to breathe
- › Cold or upper respiratory infection
- › Cough that sounds like a bark

How can I help my child?

- Try to keep your child calm. This can help make it easier for them to breathe.
- Give them small sips of fluid (water) often.
- If your child's breathing is noisy:
 - › Dress them in warm clothes and take them outside into cold air for 10 to 15 minutes, if possible.
 - › If you cannot go outside, take them into the bathroom and close the door. Turn on the hot water in the sink, shower, or bathtub so the room gets steamy for about 10 to 20 minutes.
 - › Use a cool mist vaporizer in their bedroom, open their bedroom window about 1 inch, or do both.

- If your child has a fever, give them acetaminophen (Tylenol®, Tempra®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®). Read the package to check how much medication your child should have based on their age or weight.

Go to the nearest Emergency Department or call 911 if your child:

- › Suddenly has trouble breathing
- › Is working hard to breathe and cannot get enough air
- › Is leaning forward to breathe
- › Has gray or bluish lips
- › Cannot swallow
- › Complains of a very bad sore throat
- › Drools a lot more than usual
- › Has a fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F)
- › Is restless and will not lie down

How can croup be prevented?

- Croup is contagious (spreads from person to person easily). Make sure everyone in your family washes their hands often.
- Keep all of your child's vaccines up to date.

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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