



Emergency Department

Croup

Information for Parents/ Carers

What is croup?

Croup is a common childhood viral infection which affects the throat and air passages. It is common in children under the age of five years.

Symptoms often start with a temperature and runny nose and progress to involve a:

- barking cough
- hoarse voice
- noisy breathing.

This often becomes worse at night, when your child is trying to settle to sleep; it can be very worrying for you and distressing for your child.

It may help to give your child extra pillows so that they are not lying down flat. (This can help make breathing easier). Encouraging drinks and giving Paracetamol (also called Calpol) as prescribed by your Doctor or following the instructions on the bottle, can also help.

During your attendance at the A&E Department, your child may have been given some treatment aimed at reducing the inflammation in your child's airways.

Croup usually lasts for a short time but can be uncomfortable and tiring for you child. Try to keep your child calm and let them find the most comfortable position of rest. Give them whatever they want to eat, but do not worry if they are not hungry. Their appetite will return when they feel better. It is important though to give your child plenty to drink.

To help the nurse with the assessment of your child when she visits it is useful if you have noted roughly how much your child has had to drink, when he/she last passed urine, and his/her temperature if possible.

What you can do

Be calming and reassuring

A small child may be distressed with croup. Crying can make things worse. Sit the child upright on your lap if their breathing is noisy or difficult.

Lower the fever

If a child has a fever (high temperature) their breathing is often faster, and they appear more ill.

To lower a fever:

- * Give Paracetamol liquid (Calpol) or Ibuprofen
- * Remove all the child's clothing if the room is not cold
- * Give the child lots of cool drinks & cool air
- * Some people find it is helpful to have a stroll outdoors, carrying the child upright in the cool fresh air

Other Treatments

A steroid medicine may be prescribed if felt it will be beneficial for your child.

Steroid medicines help to reduce inflammation.

A single dose often eases symptoms within a few hours. Steroid medicines do not shorten the length of the illness, but they often reduce the severity of breathing symptoms.

DO NOT give cough medicines which contain ingredients that can make a child drowsy. This will not help a child who may need extra effort to breathe.

Antibiotics are NOT usually prescribed as croup is normally caused by a virus. Antibiotics do not kill viruses.

When to seek medical help

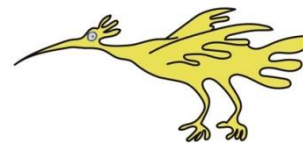
RED	If your child: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is making a harsh breathing sound as they breathe in (stridor) like a seal which is there all the time (even when they are not upset)• Is having pauses in their breathing (apnoeas), an irregular breathing pattern or starts making loud grunting sounds• Has blue lips• Too breathless to talk, eat or drink• Is confused and drowsy/ very difficult to wake OR excessively tired and pale/ mottled• Has a rash that does not disappear with pressure (I.e. the glass test)	Ring 999 immediately for help or goto your nearest Emergency Department Keep child in upright position, ideally in the cool air, keep as calm as you can and reassure them.
AMBER	If your child: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has rapid or struggled breathing- drawing in of the muscles in their chest• Is making a harsh breathing noise like a seal (stridor) when they are upset only• Seems dehydrated (sunken eyes, very drowsy, not passed urine for over 12 hours)• Is too breathless to run / play / or do any of their normal activities• Is getting worse and you are very worried about them	Immediately contact your GP or call NHS 111 and make an appointment for your child to be seen that day face to face. Whilst you are waiting, continue to recheck that your child has not developed any red features.
GREEN	If none of the above features are present	Continue to care for your child at home If you are still worried, please see your local pharmacist or call NHS 111 (telephone 111)

This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your child's treatment.

This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.

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