

Education

CROUP

(Adapted from Barton D. Schmitt Instructions for Pediatric Patients, 2nd ed. 1992)

CROUP is a narrowing of the "windpipe", usually as the result of a viral infection. The hoarseness is due to the swelling just below the vocal cords. *STRIDOR* occurs as the opening between the vocal cords becomes narrowed, due to the swelling around them.

STRIDOR is a harsh, raspy, vibrating sound or "honk" that can be heard when a child breathes in. Stridor is most often present when the child is crying or coughing. If the disease becomes worse, stridor may be heard when the child is sleeping or relaxed.

- * Croup usually lasts for 4 or 5 days, and generally gets worse at night. The worst symptoms are classically seen on the 2nd and 3rd nights of the illness
- * Primary symptoms of croup include a tight metallic cough (like a barking seal), a hoarse voice, and fever can be high early in the illness
- * Other associated symptoms may include a runny nose and sore throat

Home Treatment for Croup

Mist

- * Dry air usually makes the cough worse, so keep the child's room humidified.
Cool, moist air is best (cool mist humidifier or open the window).
On a cool night it is recommended to open the window, or for increased coughing TAKE CHILD OUTSIDE for at least 20 to 30 minutes! (air conditioning in room or car, or a car ride with open windows is also effective).
If this does not help try:
- * Steam bathroom-close the door and run the shower on hot; when bathroom is steamy take your child in for 10-15 minutes. Stay calm, cuddle child to keep him comfortable.
- * Remember that these treatments will help the breathing, but the cough will still be barky.
- * Avoid exposure to smoke-this can make croup worse.

Cold Liquids

*Constant cold, thin drinks may help to decrease the swelling in the throat and help to keep the child hydrated!

Over-the-counter medications may decrease symptoms, but will not shorten the illness.

Ibuprofen (Not recommended for < 6months old) For discomfort due to fever or for increasing "honking" sound.

Benadryl: (Not recommended for children < 4 years old) May use for increasing "honking" sound.

Dextromethorphan:(DM present in cough medicines) Not recommended unless directed by provider.

Call Back If...

- * Stridor at rest! (with every breath)
- * Breathing becomes difficult
- * Lips turn blue or dusky
- * Child develops excessive drooling, spitting, or difficulty swallowing
- * Any signs of dehydration, no urination in 12 hrs, no tears, dry mouth, sunken eyes and/or lethargy
- * Any fever > 3 days or > 103 for 4 hours or > 102 for 6 hours.

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