
CROUP

Infectious croup is caused by a virus and usually occurs in the fall and winter in epidemics. It is transmitted by person-to-person contact, sneezing or coughing, and recently contaminated articles. The incubation period is less than one week.

Croup is most often found in children 2 to 6 years of age. The illness usually starts as a mild fever and an upper respiratory infection, gradually progressing to a barking seal-like cough with stridor (noisy breathing with taking in a breath.) The cough is worse at night and the early morning. The child may have a sore throat and be hoarse. Prevention is difficult; day care centers and schools are ideal locations for transmission from child to child. Hand washing is effective and a practical means of preventing the spread of infection. Since croup is a viral infection, treatment is mostly symptomatic. However, a short course of an anti-inflammatory steroid is often helpful. In severe cases, a nebulization treatment at the office or hospital may be needed. Some children may be hospitalized for periodic nebulization treatments and oxygen administration.

Most children over the age of 2 can be treated safely at home.

At home treatment consists of:

1. Keep child's room humidified. A cold-mist vaporizer / humidifier is best.
2. Encourage fluids. Try to keep the child calm.
3. Acetaminophen may make your child feel better.
4. If your child worsens and develops increased breathing difficulty:
 - a. Try to get your child to relax.
 - b. Take child in a hot steamy bathroom for 15 - 20 min.
 - c. If no improvement, take child outside in the cold night air for 5 minutes.
 - d. If no improvement, call us and we may arrange for you to take your child to the hospital.



CALL OUR OFFICE

303-841-2905

5. Call our office immediately if:
 - a. Child has great difficulty breathing.
 - b. Lips or skin turn blue.
 - c. Drooling or difficulty swallowing develops.
 - d. Child does not improve with cold air.
 - e. Agitation or listlessness develops.
 - f. Cough does not improve in 4 - 5 days.

Keep in mind some children may suffer from spasmodic or "allergic" croup - this illness is characterized by rapid onset of a barking cough following exposure to a precipitating allergic factor with no upper respiratory infection.

Infectious viral croup may lead to secondary bacterial infections of the respiratory tract, including pneumonia, inflammation of the trachea, and otitis media (ear infections.)