

SOUTHDALE PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES, LTD.

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AFTER HOURS-EMERGENCIES 952-653-0261

CROUP
Patient Information Sheet

Croup is a viral infection that causes swelling of the vocal cords and trachea (the main airway). There is a tight, barking cough, hoarseness, and ‘stridor’. Stridor is a noise that occurs as the airway becomes narrowed. It is a raspy, vibrating sound as the child breaths IN. This is different from the noise of a plugged nose or wheezing. Mild stridor is present only with crying or coughing. As the disease becomes worse, stridor also occurs when a child is sleeping or at rest. If this happens, the child should be seen. Croup usually lasts for 5 to 6 days and generally gets worse at night. The worst symptoms are usually seen in children less than 3 years of age. Your child can return to school or child care once he feels better and the fever is gone. The croup virus is spread by coughing and secretions in the same way as cold viruses.

If your child develops stridor or a barking cough, try the following:

- Stay calm - speak quietly and soothe your child.
- Moist air seems to relax the vocal cords and break the stridor. Use a humidifier or vaporizer.
- Have the hot shower running with the bathroom door closed. Once the room is fogged up, sit there with your child. Try cuddling or reading a story to calm him/her.
- Another effective treatment is to take your child into the cold night air, or to breathe cold air through an open window.
- Never let anyone smoke around your child. Smoke can make croup worse.

Most children settle down with the above treatments and sleep peacefully through the night. If these treatments do not help, your child should be seen. Croup is potentially a dangerous disease.

Call our office IMMEDIATELY or go to the Emergency Room if:

- Your child remains restless and/or stridor remains continuous after treatments
- Breathing becomes difficult
- Your child develops drooling, spitting, or great difficulty swallowing
- Your child develops retractions (tugging in) between the ribs
- The lips turn bluish or dusky
- You feel your child is getting worse

Call our office within 24 hours if:

- The coughing spasms are getting worse
- Your child is not drinking adequately
- A fever of 102° F occurs
- You have other concerns or questions