

Signs and symptoms

- Croup is identified by a distinctive harsh 'barking' cough. Your child may have a hoarse voice when speaking; this is due to the inflammation and swelling to the vocal cords in the voice box.
- Increased effort when breathing caused by inflammation and increased mucus.
- Noisy raspy breathing, called 'stridor' caused by the narrowing of the airways.
- Symptoms similar to a cold, runny nose, sore throat, fever and generally unwell.

Post hospital care

- Once you have been seen by one of our doctors or nurses you will be discharged home.
- Most children make a quick recovery, taking one to two weeks to recover fully. They may still have a mild cough and the sniffles.
- There is usually no long term damage to the lungs.
- We usually keep you in the department for 2–3 hours post steroid treatment, in order to assess the effect of the medication.
- Contact your GP for a follow up if required. Please do not come back to A&E unless your child's condition is worsening, or unless they are triggering red on the traffic light overleaf.

Resources/contacts

- Your local pharmacy - www.nhs.uk.
- Your GP surgery - please contact your GP when the surgery is open, and call 111 when the GP is closed.
- NHS 111 provides advice for urgent care needs and is open 24hrs a day. They can arrange urgent GP appointments and calls from landlines and mobiles are free.
- NHS Choices – www.nhs.uk.
- www.whittington.nhs.uk.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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Croup

A parent's guide



Introduction

Croup is an infection of the voice box and the windpipe. It is often a mild viral illness, however can sometime be more serious. In some cases severe breathing difficulties may develop. A steroid medicine is usually prescribed to help with symptoms.

When to worry?

- If you are concerned your child's condition is worsening, please follow the traffic light advice.
- If your child is under eight weeks (or pre immunisations), seek help immediately.
- If your child is under 12 weeks old, contact your GP or call 111 for urgent advice.

What causes it and who gets Croup?

- It is caused by a virus, most commonly a parainfluenza viruses. It is infectious, so it can be passed from one person to another by droplets of saliva, or droplets from a runny nose as with an ordinary cough or cold.
- Croup is common in younger children between 1-3 years old. Due to the firming of the breathing tubes as children grow, it is rare to see it in children older than six years old.

You need EMERGENCY help in your local Accident & Emergency - call 999

- Your child becomes unresponsive or very difficult to rouse.
- They are struggling to breathe - breathing very fast or very slowly.
- They are using their accessory muscles to breath; signs of this include sucking in at the ribs when breathing in, nasal flaring, head bobbing and a grunting noise.
- Pale in colour, any signs of blueness to the lips and mouth.
- Unable to feed due to tiredness/ lethargy and becoming increasingly weak.
- Any difficulty swallowing or any drooling (especially if it's not normal for your child).

You need to contact a doctor/nurse today. Ring the GP, if they are closed call 111

- Your child is not improving despite intervention and you are generally worried.
- Your child is having reduced feeds; they should be taking more than 50% of their usual volume.
- Your child is having some mild - moderate increased respiratory effort, breathing slightly faster or deeper than normal. This should ease when they are asleep.
- Your baby is under 12 weeks old and is becoming more sleepy.
- Your child has on-going fevers.
- Coughing that sounds like a 'bark' or a 'seal'.

Self-care - use advice on this leaflet, contact 111 or NHS choices for advice

- Your child reacts well to Calpol or ibuprofen, you can administer this regularly for the duration of their illness.
- Your child has been happy, interactive and playing as usual.
- The coughing is not causing them any bother.

Treatment in hospital

- Croup starts like a normal cold, although not many colds develop into croup.
- If the oxygen in the blood is low; your child may be given some extra oxygen to breathe.
- You will need to attend ED to receive a steroid medication (usually Dexamethasone) to reduce the inflammation to the airway.
- Inhaled adrenaline is often administered in more severe cases.
- Antibiotics are not given for croup, as it's typically a virus and antibiotic will be of no benefit.