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CROUP

Croup is an illness in which part of the upper airway becomes inflamed and swollen. It is caused by a virus. Your child can have a hoarse voice, a tight barky-sounding cough, or stridor, which is a harsh, raspy, often high-pitched sound when he breathes in. The stridor can be when your child is upset or crying, or can even occur when your child is resting or relaxed. Croup typically lasts about 5 days, with the symptoms getting worse at nighttime. There may be a fever with this illness.

How is croup treated?

- Keep your child as calm as possible. Symptoms worsen when your child is upset or crying. Closely observe your child for any worsening difficulty breathing.
- Cool mist (humidifier / vaporizer) can help the irritation in the upper part of the airway. Have one in your child's bedroom or play area, and keep it running 24 hours a day. Follow the cleaning instructions that came with the machine.
- If your child's breathing is getting worse, you can place him in the bathroom, having turned on the shower to hot water to make the bathroom steamy. Have him take slow deep breaths of the moist air. Do not put your child in the shower with the hot water turned on.
- If it is late at night and the air is cool outside, take your child outside, dressed appropriately, and have him breathe in the cool outdoor air for about 15 minutes.
- Give plenty of liquids to drink.
- Give acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil / Motrin) for fever if needed. Follow the directions on the medication bottle or those given from your doctor.
- If your doctor gives a short course or oral steroids (to help reduce the swelling), give the medicine to your child as directed.
- Avoid cigarette smoke.

Call our office for:

- Concerns of dehydration
- Development of a new fever
- Cough that seems to be getting worse
- Any other questions about your child's cough or breathing.

Call 911 or go immediately to the nearest emergency department if your child:

- Is working very hard to breathe or turning blue around the lips

- Is not interactive with you or appears very tired or weak
- Has worsening difficulty breathing or has stridor when at rest / relaxed