

## Consequences of not treating croup:

- Severe breathing problems
- Lack of oxygen
- Blocking of the windpipe, which is life threatening
- Deterioration in the child's condition, meaning a more invasive treatment.

## When do I get help?

- If the breathing is difficult
- If there is a loud noise when your child is breathing in
- If your child becomes pale or cyanosed (Blue)
- If your child has a high temperature and is dribbling/drooling
- If your child is complaining of difficulty swallowing
- If your child becomes restless, irritable and or delirious
- If you notice the breastbone being drawn in severely when breathing.

This patient information leaflet is intended to be used to support discussion during your clinical consultation.

If there is anything you do not understand or are unsure about, please ask the doctor at your appointment or contact the ward.

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**Mersey and West Lancashire  
Teaching Hospitals**  
NHS Trust

# Croup

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formacie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

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**Department:** Paediatrics  
**Document Number:** MWL2727  
**Version:** 001  
**Review Date:** 31/07/2028

## What is croup?

Croup is a common childhood respiratory illness seen in young children it is a mild disease, Although it can be very worrying for parents and distressing for the child. It is common between 1-3 years of age, it becomes uncommon above 6 years of age. Croup causes a narrowing of the windpipe and reduces the amount of air to the lungs, meaning the child will find it harder to breathe. Croup is usually a sudden onset. **Your child may develop a harsh, 'bark' or 'seal-like' cough** and hoarseness, caused by inflammation of the lining of the larynx (voice box) resulting in narrowing of the breathing tube. There may also be a lot of thick mucous. The narrowing of the tube may cause noisy breathing (stridor). Breathing may become difficult if the narrowing becomes worse. Before the cough develops your child may have a sore throat, temperature, red eyes and a runny nose.

### How is Croup treated:

Mild croup can be treated at home.

The symptoms of croup are often worse at night when the air is cooler, and usually improve during the day.

Try to keep your child calm and comfort him/her on your lap. Crying can make things worse. Offering small and frequent amounts of fluid for your child to drink. Paracetamol and Ibuprofen can be used if your child has a temperature. Steam is not recommended anymore as there is little evidence to support its benefit and some children have scalded as a result.

More severe croup is treated in hospital with a steroid medication, for example **Dexamethasone**. This may help your child to breath more easily. Doctors may insert a cannula into your child's veins or a nasogastric tube to help make sure your child is hydrated if they are not taking enough fluids orally. It is important to maintain hydration. In more severe cases oxygen may be given with a steroid medication in the form of a nebuliser.

**Symptoms usually peak after 1-3 days then improves.**

## Benefits of treatment

**Croup usually clears up without any problems in 3-4 days. However the cough may last a little longer, perhaps getting worse at night when lay down.**

### The risk of treatment:

The drugs used for treatment have been shown to be well tolerated. There are few risks involved in the treatment of croup.

### Discomforts of the treatment:

Your child may not like taking the medication or having an oxygen mask on their face, they may become distressed. However please remember the treatment will make them feel more comfortable and they will be reassured, which will help them to stay calm. If the cannula is needed there will be a small sharp scratch, but in most cases we use numbing cream or freeze spray that can be put on the skin prior to insertion to stop them feeling any discomfort.

### Additional forms of treatment:

In all cases of croup, and in addition to any medical treatment, it always helps to be calm and reassuring with your child. Sitting your child upright on your lap in a darkened room and talking quietly to the child may also help.

### Temperatures:

If your child develops a temperature while at home you can give paracetamol or ibuprofen but please follow the label for dosage instructions. If your child has a temperature, their breathing is often faster, and they appear more ill. Remove any clothing if you are indoors, some parents find taking the children for a walk in a pram/stroller outdoors helps to keep the child calm and also helps to regulate the temperature. If your child is able to drink encourage cooler drinks. If your child is in hospital receiving treatment, the nursing staff will happily give your child paracetamol and or ibuprofen when required. Nursing staff will also assist with cooler drinks and ice lollies/ice cream.