

Croup is a common childhood illness that can cause a distinctive, bark-like cough which can be frightening for both you and your child.

### When should you worry?



RED

If your child has any of the following:

- Is going blue around the lips
- A harsh noise as they breath in (stridor) present all of the time (even when they are not upset)
- Has pauses in their breathing (apnoeas) or has an irregular breathing pattern
- Is too breathless to talk / eat or drink
- Becomes pale, mottled and feels abnormally cold to touch
- Becomes extremely agitated (crying inconsolably despite distraction), confused or very drowsy (difficult to wake)
- Develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure (the 'Glass Test')
- Is under 1 month of age with a temperature of 38°C /100.4°F or above

**You need urgent help.**

Go to the nearest Hospital Emergency (A&E) Department or phone 999



AMBER

If your child has any of the following:

- Has laboured/rapid breathing or they are working hard to breath – drawing in of the muscles below their lower ribs, at their neck or between their ribs
- A harsh breath noise as they breath in (stridor) present only when they are upset
- Seems dehydrated (dry mouth, sunken eyes, no tears, drowsy or passing less urine than usual)
- Is becoming drowsy (excessively sleepy)
- Has difficulty swallowing saliva
- Is 1-3 months of age with a temperature of 38°C /100.4°F or above or 3-6 months of age with a temperature of 39°C / 102.2°F or above (but fever is common in babies up to 2 days after they receive vaccinations)
- Seems to be getting worse or if you are worried

**You need to contact a doctor or nurse today.**

Please ring your GP surgery or call NHS 111 - dial 111



GREEN

- If none of the features in the red or amber boxes above are present

#### Self Care

Continue providing your child's care at home. If you are still concerned about your child, call NHS 111 – dial 111

## What are the symptoms of Croup?

Your child may have:

- A cough—the cough is usually harsh and barking. The “croupy cough” is due to inflammation and swelling of the vocal cords in the voice box (larynx).
- Noisy breathing symptoms—the inflammation can narrow the voice box (larynx) and windpipe (trachea) and cause an extra noise called a stridor. This noise is usually heard on breathing in.
- Breathing may become difficult if the narrowing becomes worse
- Croup may follow a cold but can also appear without any earlier illness. Children may also experience a high temperature (fever), general aches and pains and be off their food.
- The symptoms of croup appear worse at night. They usually peak after one to three days and then improve. A mild but irritating cough may persist for a further week or so.

## How can I help my child?

- Stay calm in order to reassure your child—children with croup may become distressed and crying may make their symptoms worse
- Sit with your child upright on your lap if their breathing is noisy or difficult. Let them find the most comfortable position.
- Encourage your child to drink cool drinks regularly (little and often) to help soothe their throat and keep them hydrated
- Give your child paracetamol or ibuprofen liquid, following the instructions on the bottle
- If their temperature is high, dress them in cool, loose clothes (if any) and don't use anything warmer than a sheet to cover them in bed
- Stay with your child, or check him or her regularly, as you need to know if symptoms get worse
- Some people find that taking their child outside in the cool, fresh air helps to relieve their symptoms.