

MATTHEW S. COHEN, MD FAAP  
PATIENT INSTRUCTION SHEET

CROUP

Croup is associated with an inflammation and swelling of the area under the larynx (voicebox) which is caused by a virus (most commonly parainfluenza).

Possible Symptoms:

- Noisy breathing
- “Barking” cough consistent with that of a “dog” or “seal”
- Shrill, high pitched sound when breathing in (Stridor), often associated with retractions, pulling in of the neck and chest during inspiration
- Fever

**It is important to stay calm.** This will keep your child calm, which will make the breathing easier. Quiet activities at home are best to keep your child occupied.

Treatment:

At home:

- Run the hot water in the shower to let the bathroom steam up. Take the child into the room and close the door. This provides high moist humidity, which helps your child breathe more easily.
- Give your child plenty of fluids by mouth.
- Provide cool mist humidification throughout the night once your child is breathing comfortably.
- At night, put your child in the car seat, roll all the windows down and drive around for approximately 10-15 minutes.
- Hold your child near an open freezer door allowing the child to inhale cold air from the freezer for approximately 5-10 minutes.
- Possible medications include oral decadron (Dexamethasone) or Prelone (Prednisolone), which are used in more severe cases of Croup.

This “barking cough” may reoccur for several nights, although your child may seem better during the day. This is not unusual. Croup worsens at night as the body’s natural anti-inflammatory activity decreases.

If you notice any of the following, bring your child back to the office or contact the emergency line:

- High pitched and noisy sounds when your child breathes while **completely at rest** or sleeping.
- Very rapid breathing and/or “pulling in” of the chest or neck when breathing.
- Drooling – unless the child did this before he/she became ill.

If you have any questions, please call.