

Croup Advice Sheet – Babies/Children Aged 3 Months to 6 Years

Name of Child Age Date/Time advice given

Further advice/ Follow up

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.....
.....

Name of Professional Signature of Professional

How is your child?

 **Red**

- Blue lips
- Unresponsive and very irritable
- Finding it difficult to breathe with heaving of chest
- Pauses in breathing or irregular breathing pattern

You need urgent help
Please call **999**

 **Amber**

- Not improving with treatment
- Breathing more noisy
- Breathing more laboured (chest 'indrawing')
- Persisting fevers of over 39°C

You need to contact a doctor or nurse today
Please ring your GP surgery or call **NHS 111**

 **Green**

- If none of the above factors are present

Self Care
Using the advice overleaf you can provide the care your child needs at home

Some Useful Contact Details



GP Surgery
Call

NHS 111
Dial 111
Available 24 hr/7 days a week

GP Out of Hours Service
Appointment booked via **NHS 111 service**
Dial 111
Available 24 hr/7 days a week

For online advice: **NHS Choices** www.nhs.uk (available 24 hours – 7 days a week)

If you need language support or translation please inform the member of staff to whom you are speaking. For more copies of this document, please contact your GP.

Croup Information Sheet – Babies/Children Aged 3 Months to 6 Years

What is croup?

- Croup is an inflammation of the voice box characterised by a typical dry barking cough and sometimes leading to difficulty in breathing.
- The condition most often affects small children. It is usually caused by a virus and occurs in epidemics particularly in the autumn and early spring.
- Symptoms start with a mild fever and a runny nose. This progresses to a sore throat and a typical barking cough. Young children have smaller air passages and inflammation in the voice box leads to the gap between the vocal cords being narrowed. This may obstruct breathing, particularly when breathing in (stridor), which often starts in the middle of the night.
- Croup develops over a period of one or two days, the severity and time that it persists varies, but often symptoms are worse on the second night of the cough.
- Croup is usually caused by a virus and for that reason antibiotics are not normally effective.
- Croup is self-limiting and symptoms usually resolve within 48 hours, although occasionally they may last for up to a week.

How can I help my baby/child?

- Be calming and reassuring. A small child may become distressed with croup. Crying can make things worse.
- Sit the child upright on your lap if their breathing is noisy or difficult. Let the child find a comfortable position.
- Give the child lots of cool drinks (if they are happy to take them).
- A cool environment such as taking your child outside at night for a brief period may help.
- Fever is a natural and healthy response to infection, so do not try to reduce your child's fever by over or under dressing them, or by sponging them with water.
- Although it is not necessary to treat fever, there are two medicines that can be used to treat distress caused by fever and being unwell. These are ibuprofen and paracetamol and they may make your child feel better. They are equally effective, so you should start with one and only use the other if the first has not worked, but you **should not** give both at the same time.
- Read the instructions carefully as these medicines come in different strengths and they may also be contained in other products that your pharmacist sells. If you have any doubt you should tell the pharmacist what you are currently using. Although both are very safe when used correctly, they may be harmful if too large a dose is given or if given too often.

Be Aware

Steam used to be commonly advised as a treatment. It was thought that steam may loosen the mucus and make it easier to breathe. However, there is little evidence that this does any good. Also, some children have been scalded by steam whilst being treated for croup. Therefore, **steam is not recommended**.

Also, **do not** make a child with breathing difficulties lie down or drink fluids if they don't want to, as that could make breathing worse.