



Croup Information Sheet

What is Croup?

Croup is a viral infection of the upper airways that causes swelling in the throat and surrounding tissues. It is caused by many viruses, including influenza A & B, parainfluenza virus (types 1 to 4), respiratory syncytial virus and coxsackievirus A & B.

Croup usually occurs in children under five (5) years of age. Once a child has had croup, he/she is likely to get it again. However, children usually do not get croup once they are ten (10) years of age and over. Croup commonly occurs in the late fall and late spring. In most cases, it develops quickly, peaks over 3 to 5 days, and resolves in 4 to 7 days.

What are the signs and symptoms of Croup?

<p>The signs and symptoms of Croup are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• barking, hacking cough• hoarse voice• "crowing" noise as the child breathes in• symptoms are often worse at night	<p>Before the cough develops, a child may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sore throat• fever• red eyes• runny nose
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Some children become so ill that they may need to be treated in the hospital.

How do you get Croup?

The virus can spread in two ways:

- through the air, in respiratory droplets that disperse when a sick person coughs or sneezes;
- from one person to another through touch. A sick person contaminates his/her hands by touching his/her eyes, nose or mouth and can spread the virus to others through touch.

A person with croup is contagious shortly before symptoms begin and for the duration of active disease.

How do we prevent the spread of Croup?

To prevent the spread of the virus to others, wash hands frequently and avoid sharing items such as cups, glasses and utensils with an infected person.

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For further information, please call:
York Region Health Services **Health Connection**

1-800-361-5653

www.region.york.on.ca

How is Croup treated?

Humidification of the air is often recommended, as moisture helps soothe the airway and break up congestion. Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen may be given to reduce chest discomfort or fever. Steroid medications, adrenaline and oxygen have been found to be effective, and are routinely given in hospital to treat moderate to severe cases of croup. Antibiotics will not cure croup because it is a viral infection. Antihistamines and decongestants do not help.

What can parents do for treatment of Croup?

Most children with mild croup can be treated at home:

- Sit the child up, which will allow him/her to breathe more easily.
- Encourage plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Avoid heavy meals as coughing may provoke vomiting.
- Dress your child appropriately and take them into the cool air, or slightly open the child's window for 15 to 20 minutes to let the cool air in. Often, cool air will help decrease swelling in his/her throat.
- To help clear the airway, have the child breathe moist/humidified air to add moisture to the throat and decrease the thickness of secretions. Humidified air can be provided by:
 - Having your child breathe through a warm, wet washcloth placed over the nose and mouth.
 - Running hot water in your shower with the bathroom door closed. Once the room has become steamy or has fogged up, sit the child in the room for approximately 10 minutes.

To avoid scalding, do not place your child directly in front of steam. Children should be supervised at all times.

Seek medical attention if your child develops any of the following:

- fever of 102° F (39°C) or higher
- rapid breathing
- difficulty breathing
- restlessness
- a severe sore throat
- problems swallowing
- drooling (new or increased)
- blueness around the mouth, nose and nails
- inability to speak
- discomfort when lying down.