

### What is croup?

Croup is an infection of the breathing tube (trachea or windpipe) below the vocal chords (voice box). Croup is caused by a virus, so antibiotics won't help. This virus causes the lining of the windpipe to become swollen. This causes a lot of noise when your child breathes in. Your child may also find it hard to breathe.

Croup happens more often through the winter and early spring (October to May). It is most common in babies and children aged 1 to 4 years. Croup usually lasts for five or six days.

### How will I know if my child has croup?

If your child has croup, they will have:

- noisy breathing (especially when breathing in)
- a hoarse voice
- a bark-like cough

They may also have a fever and feel unwell. With croup, breathing trouble is often worse at night. Your child may even wake up because they are having a hard time breathing.

### How can I take care of my child at home?

- Wrap your child in a blanket and bring them outside into the cool air. You can also hold your child in front of an open window or open freezer door. If your child's breathing is still noisy and difficult after 10-15 minutes, bring your child to the hospital.
- Ensure they get lots of rest.
- Give them plenty of fluids like breast milk, water, apple juice, popsicles, or formula.
- Treat sore throat and fever. Give your child ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) or acetaminophen (Tylenol®, Tempra®) for fever or sore throat. Do not give ibuprofen to babies under six months.

#### Bring your child to the hospital if they:

- have loud, laboured breathing after 10-15 minutes of cool air exposure
- have blue lips or fingernails
- won't drink
- have trouble swallowing
- are weak and have no energy
- start to drool



#### Helpful numbers

Telehealth Ontario  
1-866-797-0000  
TTY: 1-866-797-0007

Health information from  
registered nurses, 24 hours a  
day, 7 days a week

