



Discharge Information – Croup

What is Croup?

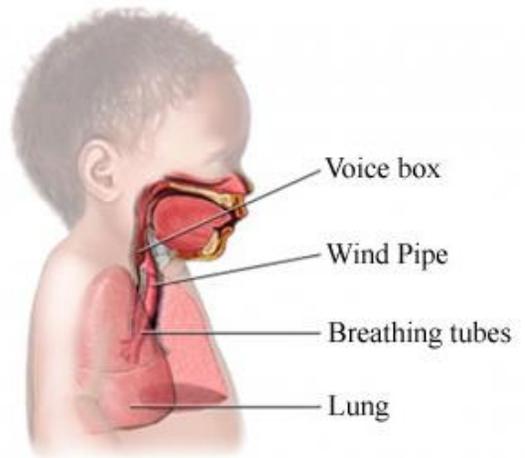
Your child has croup. This is a viral illness which affects young children and causes swelling and narrowing of the upper airways (voice box and windpipe).

What are the signs and symptoms of croup?

- A dry 'barking' cough which may be worse at night.
- Stridor, which is a harsh noise that is heard as your child breathes in.

How long will my child be sick?

- Your child may have stridor for a few days and the cough may last for up to a week.



What is the treatment?

- Croup is caused by viruses, so antibiotics do not help.
- Mild cases of croup can be managed at home and no medication is needed.
- Your Doctor may prescribe a single dose of a steroid medicine which will reduce swelling in your child's airway and help them to breathe more easily. Steroids improve the stridor but have little effect on the cough.

If you are concerned about the use of steroids, please note that a single dose is safe and will have no harmful effects on your child. They work for up to 48 hours.

How can I care for my child at home?

- If your child becomes upset, remain calm and comfort your child—distress can make their breathing and stridor worse.
- Sips of cool fluid or ice blocks may be soothing if your child's throat is sore.
- You can give Paracetamol if your child is miserable with a fever or has a sore throat. (Follow the dosage instructions on the bottle carefully)
- Although adding steam to the air used to be recommended, there is no evidence it actually helps. (There have been several cases where children have been badly burned from the hot water) We do not recommend using steam for croup.
- **DO NOT let anyone smoke near your child.**

When to take your child back to the Doctor or Emergency Department?

- If your child is:
 - Finding it difficult to breathe
 - Constantly upset and cannot be comforted
 - Pale, has a high temperature, or is dribbling
 - Drinking less than half what they normally would
 - Making fewer wet nappies than normal
- If you are worried about them
- The danger signs

Danger Signs – When to call an ambulance?

If your child is:

- Extremely breathless or looking like they are too tired to breathe
- Unusually sleepy
- Very pale or has a slight blue colour to the lips or gums
- So breathless that they are distressed and you cannot calm them down



Dial 111 for an ambulance

Will my child get croup again?

It is uncommon for children to have more than one episode of croup per year for their first two or three years. If your child has recurrent symptoms of stridor or barking cough (that is, several episodes each year, or episodes that continue into school age), they should be reviewed by your family doctor.

Discharge Checklist.

Before you take your child home we will check that you feel confident to manage at home and you know:

- What to expect over the next few days
- Who to contact if you are concerned
- When to go and see your family doctor
- What follow up your child needs
- When to bring your child back to the Emergency Department
- The danger signs

Where to get advice or information?

- Your family doctor
- After hours medical service
- <http://www.kidshealth.org.nz/>
- Healthline: 0800 611 116
- North Shore Hospital ECC: 486 1491,
- Waitakere Hospital ED: 839 0000

