

# **Croup**

## ***Brief Version***

### **What is a croupy cough ?**

A croupy cough is when your child has a tight, "barking" cough and usually a hoarse voice.

### **What is stridor?**

Stridor is when your child breathes in, you hear a harsh, raspy sound. This happens with severe croup.

### **What causes croup?**

Croup is a viral infection of the vocal cords. Stridor occurs as the opening between the cords becomes more narrow.

### **How can I take care of my child?**

#### **First Aid for Attacks of Stridor With Croup**

- **Inhalation of warm mist.** Warm, moist air seems to work best to relax the vocal cords and break the stridor. Take your child into a foggy bathroom. Have a warm shower running with the bathroom door closed. If your child continues to have stridor 20 minutes after mist treatment, call 911.

#### **Home Care for a Croupy Cough Without Stridor**

- **Humidifier.** Dry air usually makes coughs worse. Keep your child's bedroom humid. (Use a humidifier if the air is dry.)
- **Warm fluids for coughing spasms.** Warm drinks (such as warm apple juice or warm lemonade) may relax the vocal cords and loosen up sticky mucus. You can give warm fluids to children over 4 months old.
- **Cough medicines.** Medicines are less helpful than mist or warm fluids. Give 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of corn syrup to thin secretions.

#### **Call your child's doctor right away if:**

- Breathing becomes difficult (when your child is not coughing).
- Your child starts drooling or having a lot of trouble swallowing.
- The warm mist fails to clear up the stridor in 20 minutes.
- Your child starts acting very sick.

#### **Call your child's doctor during office hours if:**

- A fever lasts more than 3 days.
- Croup lasts more than 10 days.
- You have other questions or concerns.

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