

Fast Facts

Croup

- Infection of the upper airway that usually starts as a cold
 - Most often caused by the parainfluenza virus
- Results in swelling to the area of the larynx (vocal chords), trachea (windpipe) and bronchi (bronchial tubes or upper part of the lungs)
- Swelling causes the airways to become narrowed producing a high-pitched whistling sound (stridor) when they inhale and a cough that sounds like a seal barking when they exhale
- Children under the age of three are more at risk because their airways are naturally smaller
- Crying, agitation and anxiety can increase coughing, which makes the inflammation worse

| <i>Symptoms</i> | <i>Treatment</i> | <i>Prevention</i> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Cough -Fever -Hoarse voice -Noisy breathing -Labored breathing | <p><i>Home:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep child calm (rock in a chair, sing lullabies or read stories) -Hold child in an upright position -Speak in soothing tones -Let child hold favorite toy/blanket -Moisten air with humidifier or sitting in bathroom with warm shower water running -Give child plenty of fluids (infants = breast milk, formula or water and toddlers and older children = soup or popsicles) -Reduce fever with over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen -Don't give over-the-counter cold medicines to children under the age of two -Nonprescription cough medicines don't help with croup -Sleep in the same room as your child <p><i>Doctor's Office:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Symptoms continue more three to five days -Prescribe steroid medications <p><i>Hospital:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Child is having difficulty breathing or symptoms get worse -Medications to open child's airway quickly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep child away from sick individuals -Practice frequent and proper hand-washing (your child and yourself) -Disinfect any toys and surfaces that your child plays with -Teach your children to cough or sneeze into their elbow -Keep child up to date on their vaccinations |

Note: If you notice your child making noisy, high-pitched breathing sounds (stridor) not just when inhaling, but exhaling, they begin drooling/having difficulty swallowing, they seem extremely anxious/agitated or fatigued/listless, they are breathing at a faster rate than normal, they are struggling to breathe or they have blue/grayish skin around their nose, mouth or fingernails (cyanosis), then you should call 911!

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