

Patient Information

CROUP

St. John Hospital
Vanderhoof, BC

250-567-2211

Croup is caused by a viral infection in the breathing passages in and below the throat. The infection causes these passages to swell and narrow, making it hard for the child to breathe. As the breath is pulled through the narrowed windpipe, it makes a crowing sound (called stridor). A child with croup usually also has a barking cough and a hoarse voice. Croup usually lasts 5-6 days. Symptoms may be worse at night.

Instructions for Treating Croup

1. You can help your child best if you stay calm. Children can sense panic.
2. There is no medication which can be taken at home that can help croup. Viral infections do not respond to antibiotics.
3. Sit your child upright or on your knee – it is harder to breathe lying down.
4. Have your child breathe cool, moist air: place a humidifier close to the bed or take your child to the bathroom, close the door and turn on the shower so that a lot of steam is created.

5. If your child is still not breathing more easily, take him/her outside in the fresh air for a few minutes.

6. Bring you child to the Emergency Department if:

- It becomes more difficult for your child to breath and he/she becomes agitated.
- Your child has difficulty breathing when lying down.
- Your child's lips, fingernails or toenails turn blue.
- Your child is drooling or has a sore throat.
- Your child is unable to drink.
- Your child is becoming listless.

Note: These instructions apply only to a child who has been seen by a physician to exclude other croup-like diseases (e.g., Epiglottitis).