

Patient information

Croup

What is it?

Croup is a childhood condition that affects the windpipe (trachea), the airways to the lungs (the bronchi) and the voice box (larynx).

Croup usually affects young children aged between six months and three years, with most cases occurring in one-year-olds. Older and younger children can get croup but it is not as likely. A child can get croup at any time of the year, although it's more likely to occur during late autumn or early winter. This may be because there are more viruses, such as colds and 'flu, around at this time of year.

Symptoms of croup

Typical symptoms of croup include:

- a bark-like cough
- a hoarse or croaky voice
- difficulty breathing
- a harsh grating sound when breathing in, called stridor

Stridor is often most noticeable when the child cries or coughs, but in more severe cases of croup it can also occur when the child is resting or sleeping.

Symptoms tend to be worse at night.

Some children have cold-like symptoms for a few days before developing croup symptoms. These cold-like symptoms can include:

- sore throat
- runny nose
- cough
- high temperature (fever)

Although croup symptoms usually only last for a few days, they can occasionally last up to two weeks.

In hospital

Your child will normally be given a medication called dexamethasone or prednisolone to help reduce swelling (inflammation) in your child's throat. Side effects of these medications can include restlessness, vomiting, upset stomach and headache.

If this does not help, they may be given nebulisers (steamed medication) to help them.

At home

- Ensure your child has plenty of fluids to keep them hydrated.
- If your child is distressed, comfort and cuddle them as crying can make croup symptoms worse. They may be more comfortable sitting upright on your lap.
- Give paracetamol or ibuprofen to help with the discomfort caused by croup (follow instructions on bottle).
- Symptoms usually resolve within 48 hours, although some episodes may last for up to one week.

When to worry

Call 999 or go to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E) if your baby is or has:

- Blue lips, skin or tongue
- Continuous stridor (noisy breathing) when they are settled

- Not responding like they would normally to social cues or becomes unresponsive
- Very irritable
- Difficulty breathing

Contact your GP/out of hours GP, or use open access to Rainbow Ward (if still valid) if your child gets one or more of the following:

- Bark like cough
- Stridor (noisy breathing) when distressed
- Is unsettled despite regular pain relief

Call NHS 111, your GP or Rainbow Ward if you still have valid open access if:

- If you have any concerns or worries about your baby/child
- Need further advice

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)

<https://www.accessable.co.uk>



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