



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

CROUP

What is croup?

Croup is swelling around the vocal cords that cause a “barking” cough. Croup is usually caused by a virus, but it can be caused by bacteria, allergies, or can have other causes. Most croup will go away in 3 to 7 days. Croup is usually seen in children, but can happen at any age.

How is croup spread?

Croup may be spread through the following ways:

- Being around someone else who is sick. They may not have the same cough. They may just have a “cold”.
- Not washing hands. Viruses and bacteria can live on surfaces.

What are possible symptoms?

Croup usually starts as a mild cold for a few days before the cough starts.

Symptoms may include:

- A cough that sounds like a seal barking. It tends to be worse at night.
- Trouble breathing and making noise when breathing in.
- Blue lips or drooling.

If child is having difficulty breathing and is not responding to treatment at home call your doctor or 911.

How is croup diagnosed?

It can be diagnosed by a parent’s description of the symptoms, or by listening to the cough, even over the phone. Sometimes, a doctor may need to see the child or do an x-ray.

What is the treatment for croup?

You can try bringing the child into a steamy bathroom or outside into the cool night air for relief. If the child has a fever, medicine like Tylenol or ibuprofen, can lower the fever and make the child more comfortable.

Recommended childhood vaccines protect children from some of the most dangerous forms of croup.

For more information on croup:

Ottawa County Health Department
www.miOttawa.org
National Institute of Health, Medline Plus
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000959.htm