What Treatment May Your Child Need?

1. Most children respond well to an oral STEROID medicine (given by mouth) to reduce swelling. Few may need to INHALE a STEROID (given by NEBULISER) if unable to swallow or being sick.
2. Children with more severe symptoms may need a NEBULISER containing ADRENALINE.
3. OXYGEN may also be given to help with breathing.
4. Your child may need an overnight hospital stay for OBSERVATION.

Key points:

1. There is no specific treatment for croup and it usually gets better in 3-4 days.
2. Try to calm your child as breathing is more difficult when your child is upset.
3. Croup symptoms can worsen quickly. If your child is having problems breathing, they should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible.

References

This leaflet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation.

Details of the references used in writing this leaflet are available on request from:

Policy Co-ordinator/Archivist
01253 303397
What is croup?

Croup is a common viral infection that causes swelling of the windpipe (voice box and airway). Most commonly croup occurs in autumn and winter months when weather gets cooler.

Croup commonly affects children between the age of 6 months and 6 years.

What are the symptoms?

1. Cough - Usually harsh and barking.
2. Noisy breathing (stridor).
3. Recession (Pulling in of the muscles between ribs and around the neck when breathing in).
4. May have high temperature - child looks pink and flushed.
5. In severe cases; difficulty swallowing or drooling.

What Should You Do If Your Child Gets Croup?

1. Stay CALM and reassure your child - reducing anxiety will help to make breathing easier.
2. Allow them to stay in their preferred position to allow easier breathing (usually an upright position).
3. Offer your child COOL DRINKS regularly. (Note: They may not feel like eating).
4. Lower the fever (raised temperature) by giving Paracetamol (Calpol) or Ibuprofen and lightly dressing your child (put on cool, loose clothes) if the room is not too cold.

Check on your child regularly. Symptoms may become WORSE at night and onset of any breathing difficulties may be sudden. Your child may be more settled if you are able to stay with them.

Steam Inhalation is NOT recommended as there is little evidence to suggest using steam in children with croup is helpful, and some children have been scalded with the steam.

When To See Your DOCTOR (GP):

1. If your child's high temperature persists despite giving Paracetamol (Calpol) or Ibuprofen.
2. If your child looks more poorly and is unusually pale, or becomes restless, agitated or distressed.
3. If your child seems to be finding breathing difficult (rapid breathing, needing more effort to breathe, or the chest or neck muscles being pulled in with each breath).

Call an emergency AMBULANCE if your child:

1. Becomes blue (cyanosed) - around face and lips.
2. Is unusually sleepy.
3. Is struggling to breathe.
4. Is drooling or unable to swallow or feed easily.