Croup

Croup is an *inflammation* (soreness) of the *larynx* (voice box) often caused by a viral infection during a cold or viral upper respiratory infection. It usually lasts several days and generally is worse at night. Because of its viral cause, *antibiotics* (medications which kill germs) will not help in treatment. It is generally characterized by a barking cough and a low grade temperature.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Calm your child during an attack. This will help their breathing. Remain calm yourself. Gently holding your little one to your chest and talking soothingly and calmly and rubbing their back will help lessen their fears and help them breath more easily.
- Sitting in a steam-filled room with your child may help. Running water forcefully from a shower or into a tub in a closed bathroom may help with croup. If the night air is cool or cold, this will also help, but dress your child warmly.
- A cool mist vaporizer or steamer in your child's room will also help at night. Do not use the older hot steam vaporizers. These are not as helpful and may cause burns.
- During an attack, good hydration is important. Do not attempt to give liquids or food during a coughing spell or when breathing appears difficult.
- Watch for signs of *dehydration* (loss of body fluids) including dry lips and mouth and little or no urination.

It is important to be aware that croup usually gets better, but may worsen after you get home. It is very important to monitor your child's condition carefully. An adult should be with the child through the first few days of this illness.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child is having trouble breathing or swallowing.
- Your child is leaning forward to breathe or is drooling. These signs along with inability to swallow may be signs of a more serious problem. Go immediately to the emergency department or call for immediate emergency help**.**
- Your child's skin is *retracting* (the skin between the ribs is being sucked in during inspiration) or the chest is being pulled in while breathing.
- Your child's lips or fingernails are becoming blue (*cyanotic*).
- Your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 102º F (38.9º C) or higher.
- **Your baby is 3 months old or younger with a rectal temperature of 100.4º F (38º C) or higher.**

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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