

Croup

Croup is spasmodic narrowing and inflammation of the upper respiratory tract.

What to look for

- A harsh, dry [cough](#).
- Laboured breathing and fever

Croup is a viral infection of the voice box. It shows similar symptoms to those of a respiratory infection and is a relatively common ailment of childhood.

Usually the first indication is a cough that sounds like the bark of a seal. Your child may also have trouble breathing and may a strange sound may be produced when your child inhales.

Croup lasts for five or six days and is highly contagious. It usually affects children between three months and six years old (the average age is two), whose small windpipes and bronchial passages are vulnerable to blockage. It is not usually dangerous and can be remedied at home. In severe cases your child may need to be hospitalised.

Causes

Most croup cases are caused by a virus. The disease is transmitted by coughing.

Traditional Treatment

It is a must that both you and your child stay calm as being anxious will make breathing more difficult. The simplest remedy is moist air. Switch off all heating appliances and air conditioners and put the child in a humid environment.

Because the condition commonly worsens at night, many doctors recommend that you sleep in the same room with your child to be able to monitor the condition. Be ready to get medical help if your child doesn't improve.

Doctors have recommended home care this condition unless the child is having great difficulty breathing.

Alternative/Natural Treatments

Herbal Therapies – To alleviate a persistent cough, herbalists use [aniseed](#) (*Pimpinella anisum*), sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), [thyme](#) (*Thymus vulgaris*), or wild cherry (*Prunus serotina*) bark.

Homoeopathy – [Aconite](#) is favoured by Homoeopaths for croup. If Aconite doesn't work try *Spongia* in the same dosage and intervals. For a more mucus-filled bronchial cough, *Hepar sulphuris* is the third choice for acute croup.

Aromatherapy – Give the child a bath and add a few drops of [eucalyptus](#), wintergreen or menthol.

Personal Care

- A cool-mist humidifier may help your child breathe.
- Steam may help loosen phlegm and relax the throat. Turn on the shower and let steam accumulate in your bathroom. Carry your child around in the room (but not under the shower) until the child's breathing becomes easier.
- Give your child plenty of liquids (not citrus).
- Keep your child away from cigarette smoke.

When to seek further professional advice

- High fever accompanies croup.
- Home remedies are not working and the symptoms seem to be getting worse