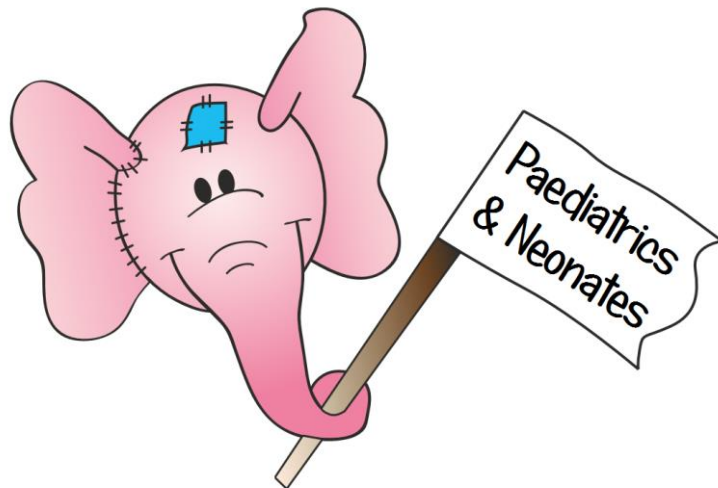


Croup

Children's Ward

Parent/Carer Information Leaflet



Introduction

Your child has come into hospital with croup. We know it is a very frightening experience seeing your child having difficulty breathing, which is why we have devised this leaflet to explain the facts about croup.

What is croup?

Croup is a common condition that affects the upper airways and voice box in children. Croup causes swelling of the throat and surrounding tissues. It is common between the ages of six months to six years. Usually children do not get croup over the age of 10 years old.

It is usually caused by a virus. Several viruses can cause croup but in most cases, it is the parainfluenza virus.

What are the symptoms of croup?

Your child may have been unwell with a sore throat, temperature, red eyes and a runny nose before they developed the symptoms of croup. These are:

- A barking, hacking cough that is often described as being similar to the call of a seal or sea lion. This is the result of swelling around the vocal cords and windpipe.
- A hoarse voice.
- Noisy, rasping breathing which may be painful or difficult when breathing in.

These symptoms may be mild, moderate or severe and are often worse at night. Some children become so ill that they may need to be treated in hospital.

How does croup spread?

It is spread in a similar way to a cold. It spreads through the air when a sick child coughs or sneezes, or through touch. For example, a sick child can get the virus on their hands by touching their eyes, nose or mouth and spread the virus to others through touch.

A child with croup is contagious shortly before symptoms begin and for the length of the illness.

What is the treatment for croup?

The treatment for croup depends on the severity of the child's condition. Most cases of croup do not need medical treatment and the child will get better on their own. However, when croup is severe, sometimes medical treatment is needed.

Medical treatment

- When your child is in hospital for croup, we will give them a dose of a steroid medication called dexamethasone. Dexamethasone is a medicine given by mouth which reduces inflammation. It is designed to reduce swelling in the throat. Your GP may already have prescribed a dose of this medicine for your child.

If this medicine is effective, we may give your child another dose 12 hours or more after the first dose.

- If your child is too unwell to take a steroid medicine by mouth, we may need to give them a steroid medicine using a nebuliser. A nebuliser turns medication into a mist that can be breathed in through a face mask.
- Alternatively, if your child has severe croup, we may use a nebuliser to give them adrenaline. This will help improve symptoms within 10 to 30 minutes and the effects should last for up to two hours.
- Your child may need oxygen therapy while they are recovering in hospital.
- Although antibiotics are not effective for croup as it is usually from a viral infection, your child's doctor may give them antibiotics if they are concerned that your child may also have a bacterial infection.

How can I help my child?

- Keep your child calm – croup can be very distressing so it is important to comfort them to try and keep them calm.
- Sitting your child upright or carrying your child in cool fresh air can help with breathing.
- At night help your child to find a comfortable position to sleep in.
- You can give your child regular paracetamol or ibuprofen, if it is suitable for your child (always read the label; do not exceed the recommended dose). This will help keep your child comfortable and relieve a high temperature.

- As a high temperature will increase the effort of breathing, make sure your child is not too hot by reducing the amount of clothing they are wearing.
- Give your child plenty to drink.

Things to avoid

- As coughing may cause your child to be sick, it is a good idea to avoid heavy meals.
- Avoid cough medicines that cause drowsiness as this will increase your child's effort in breathing.
- Avoid smoky environments.
- Panicking will stress your child.

When should I be concerned?

Seek medical attention if your child develops any of the following symptoms:

- Fever (temperature) of 39°C or higher
- Rapid breathing
- Difficulty breathing
- Restlessness
- A sore throat
- Discomfort when lying down
- Problems swallowing
- Drooling (new or increased)
- Blueness around the mouth, nose and nails
- Inability to speak

How can I prevent croup from spreading?

The best way to prevent croup from spreading is good hygiene. This includes frequently washing hands and surfaces, and avoiding sharing items such as cups, glasses and utensils with a person who is infected.

How long will croup last?

Normally croup lasts about three to five days but it can last up to a week. Your child may continue to have a croupy cough but the difficulty in breathing will settle.

Can I find out more?

You can find out more from the following weblink:

NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Croup/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

If you have any questions or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Children's Ward on 01384 244271

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/c2-childrens-ward/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta brosură poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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