How to Care for Your Child with Croup

This leaflet will provide you with information about Croup symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

What is Croup?

Croup is a common inflammatory condition in children that affects the larynx (voice box) and the trachea (windpipe). The most common cause is viruses. Croup commonly occurs during the winter and – but not exclusively- affects children between the age of 6 months to 6 years.

What are the symptoms of Croup?

- Barking cough.
- Raspy voice.
- A high-pitched noise when the child breathes (Also called stridor)
- Fever.
- Runny nose.
- Rash.
- Red eyes.

Symptoms are usually mild and last for less than a week.

How is Croup diagnosed?

The doctor will ask you a few questions about your child’s health then examine your child. Blood test and x-ray are normally not required.
How is Croup treated?

Supportive treatment is very important in treating Croup, please follow the below instructions:

- Keep your child calm; crying can make Croup worse.
- Make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids.
- Make sure your child gets appropriate rest.

If your doctor advises giving medicine for pain and fever, you can give:

- Paracetamol (or any other brand).
- Ibuprofen (or any other brand).
- Follow the instruction on the medicine package for the correct dose for your child.

How is Croup prevented?

There is no specific way to prevent Croup, but hand washing and hand hygiene are necessary for preventing the spread of infection.

- Ensure your child cover his/her mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing; use a tissue and dispose of immediately.
- If no tissues available, sneezing/coughing into the sleeve of one's clothing (at the inner elbow).
- Encourage your child to wash hands with water and soap after coughing, sneezing or blowing his/her nose.
- Use alcohol-based hand rubs if water and soap is not available.

Home care advice

- Do not give Aspirin to your child as this can cause a serious complication.
- Don't expose your child to smoking, as this can make Croup worse.
- Children with Croup can spread the infection three days after the illness begins or until the fever is gone.

When should I seek medical advice?

Seek medical care if your child:

- Has fever for more than three days (higher than 101°F or 38.3°C).
- Not getting better despite home care advice.
- Has symptoms of Croup for more than seven days.
- Appears dry and less energetic.
- Has no tears when crying.
- Cannot drink or eat.
- Has muffled voice (Not clear voice).

**Go to the Emergency Department if your child:**

- Has swelling in his/her neck or stiffness.
- Is drooling excessively.
- Has difficulty opening the mouth.
- Has difficulty in breathing or stridor.
- Is pulling up his neck and chest muscles when breathing.

**When to call 999?**

Call 999 if your child is struggling to breathe or starts to turn blue.