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Treatment of Croup

Croup is an illness affecting the upper airway system, including the vocal cords, trachea, and bronchial tubes. It produces a very characteristic cough which sounds like a seal barking. Children usually have a hoarse voice with croup. They may also have stridor, which is a harsh sound with breathing in. Fevers are very common and can frequently run to 104 degrees.

Croup is caused by a number of different viruses, including parainfluenza and influenza. The illness usually lasts 5 to 7 days but the worst coughing usually lasts 2 or 3 days. The cough is almost always worst at night.

Keeping your child calm and comfortable will help reduce the severity of croup. Increasing the humidity in the child's bedroom may also be helpful. Use a cool air humidifier since the warm ones can cause burns.

If your child is having a bad bout of coughing during the night turn on a hot shower in the bathroom. When the room is full of steam take your child into the bathroom and sit there for 10 or 15 minutes. This will usually break the coughing cycle.

If the steam does not break the cough, cold air usually will. Bundle your child in warm clothes and take him or her outside. Breathing cold air for a few minutes will often stop the cough.

If your child still seems unable to stop coughing a ride in the car will often work. This will help to relax your child and also give them more cool air to breath.

Call us immediately or go to the emergency room if your child exhibits any of the following:

- Difficulty swallowing or continuous drooling.
- Severe sucking in of the chest with each breath.
- Bluish discoloration of the lips.