

Croup: Brief Version

What is a croupy cough?

A croupy cough is when your child has a tight, "barking" cough and usually a hoarse voice.

What is stridor?

Stridor is when your child breathes in, you hear a harsh, raspy sound. This happens with severe croup.

What causes croup?

Croup is a viral infection of the vocal cords. Stridor occurs as the opening between the cords becomes more narrow.

How can I take care of my child?

First Aid for Attacks of Stridor With Croup

- **Inhale warm mist.** Warm, moist air seems to work best to relax the vocal cords and break the stridor. Take your child into a foggy bathroom. Have a hot shower running with the bathroom door closed. If your child turns blue, passes out, or stops breathing, call 911.
- **Cold air.** If it is cold outside, take your child outdoors. Holding your child in front of an open refrigerator may help too.

Home Care for a Croupy Cough Without Stridor

- **Humidifier.** Dry air usually makes coughs worse. Keep your child's bedroom humid. (Use a humidifier if the air is dry.)
- **Warm fluids for coughing spasms.** Warm drinks (such as warm apple juice or warm lemonade) may relax the vocal cords and loosen up sticky mucus. You can give warm fluids to children over 4 months old. Give lots of fluids to prevent dehydration.
- **Cough medicines.** Medicines are much less helpful than mist or warm fluids. If your child is over 1 year of age, give 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of honey to thin secretions.

Call your child's doctor right away if:

- Breathing becomes difficult (when your child is not coughing).
- Your child starts drooling or having a lot of trouble swallowing.
- The warm mist fails to clear up the stridor in 20 minutes.
- Your child starts acting very sick.

Call your child's doctor during office hours if:

- A fever lasts more than 3 days.
- Croup lasts more than 10 days.
- You have other questions or concerns.

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