

Croup

Croup is a virus that affects the upper airway. Typically there is a "barky" cough. Many people also describe the cough to sound like a seal. This is an illness that is caused by a virus, which causes swelling in the upper airway and therefore can restrict breathing.

Signs and Symptoms

- "Barky" Cough: Which worse at night.
- Fever: Usually low grade.
- Difficulty Breathing
- Hoarse Voice

Treatment

There is no curative treatment for croup. It is a self-limiting viral illness that will resolve in 5 - 7 days without any medication. The cough and hoarse voice will get worse the first few days and then begin to taper off slowly. The most important goal of the treatment of croup should be to keep the airway open and moist so that your child can breathe easily. For severe cases, it may be necessary to use an anti-inflammatory, such as a steroid, to help reduce the swelling in the upper airway. Use a cool mist humidifier to help keep the airway open and moist. Also, standing in the steam from a hot shower will make breathing easier. When the steam and cool mist have failed, and your child is having difficulty breathing, you will need medical attention.

Complications

The most severe complication is difficulty breathing. When your child has croup, you must observe their breathing closely. Watch for any changes in breathing patterns, gasping, increase drooling, and difficulty swallowing. If these things occur medical attention is required immediately.