

## **CROUP**

- 1.) **Definition:** Croup is caused by a viral infection in and around the voice box. It usually is accompanied by cold symptoms and possibly fever. It causes laryngitis and a tight cough that sounds like a seal's bark. When croup becomes worse, it causes a crowing noise (stridor) every time your child breathes in. Croup usually lasts for five to six days. During that time, it can change from mild to severe many times. It is usually worse at night.
- 2.) **Home Treatment:**
  - a.) Mist: Keep the child's room humidified. Use a cool-mist vaporizer and run it all night.
  - b.) Increase fluid intake. Any fluid will do, even milk.
  - c.) Medicines-Over-the-counter cold medications and antibiotics are not helpful in treating croup. Stick with the vaporizer and increased fluids.
- 3.) **Treatment for serious croup:** With croup it is not unusual for your child to have noisy breathing or a croupy cough, especially when upset or crying. But if your child has stridor at rest (a crowing noise when sitting quietly in your lap):
  - a.) Take the child outside for 5-10 minutes. Sometimes a blast of cold night air will stop the stridor.
  - b.) In the meantime, run a hot shower with the bathroom door closed. Once the room is steamy, sit in there with your child on your lap. Try reading a short story to pass the time. Fear and crying make croup worse.
  - c.) If this doesn't work, dress the child, go out in the car and drive around the block with the windows down for a few minutes.

Most children settle down and breathe easier with one of the above treatments and then sleep peacefully through the night. If, instead, the stridor is still present after all this call the doctor on-call.

- 4.) **Call our office during regular hours if:**
  - a.) The croupy cough goes on past seven days
- 5.) **Call our office urgently or go to the ER/call 911 if:**
  - a.) The color of the lips and skin starts turning blue.
  - b.) The child is having great difficulty breathing in.
  - c.) The child is drooling heavily.
  - d.) The child has stridor even when sitting quietly without coughing.