

CROUP:

WHY DOES MY CHILD SOUND LIKE A DOG BARKING?

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CROUP

Croup is caused by *parainfluenza* and other viruses, and is very common. It affects children mostly between the ages of 1 and 4 years. The **croup** syndrome often begins with a few days of a typical cold with runny nose, cough, and maybe lowgrade fever. Then the croup phase kicks in, almost always at night. Parents hear a hoarse voice, and a distinctive barky cough sounding just like a seal or barking dog. These croup attacks usually last for a few nights.

The vast majority of children with **croup** require only mist provided by a vaporizer (or steam in the shower) and patience for the horrible sounding cough. Antibiotics do not help, and albuterol won't help either. We should examine your child in the office if your children has a bad night of croup (especially if there is a breathing-in noise, called stridor.) Some children may benefit from steroids (either inhaled, by mouth, or by injection).

These viruses usually resolve in less than one week. If your child is not improving, there may be complications such as an ear infection, pneumonia, or asthma. Call us if your child is not improving or if there is any trouble breathing. (We are always available for phone consultation at 845-623-7100. In a true breathing emergency, call 911!) Rarely, children with croup will need breathing treatments in the emergency room if they still having trouble breathing in (stridor) after the treatments we've mentioned.

We hope you find our *Parentletter* helpful and informative. Please keep in mind that receipt of this newsletter does not create a doctor/patient relationship and that it is not meant to serve as a substitute for professional medical advice. For particular pediatric medical concerns, including decisions about diagnoses, medications and other treatments, or if you have any questions after reading this newsletter, please speak with your child's pediatrician. (All illustrations © D.Puder,MD)