

CROUP

Croup is a virus infection of the larynx, or voice box. There is no specific treatment for croup; all we can do is try to relieve the child's symptoms until such time as the disease gets better by itself. The course of the disease is unpredictable – frequently, the croup is worse at night. Extreme agitation or restlessness may be evidence that the child is not getting enough oxygen. Try to keep the child quiet; crying makes croup worse.

The most important part of management is steam. This can be accomplished in several ways:

1. A vaporizer or humidifier should be used in the child's bedroom. The cool mist type is preferable, since the warm mist type carries with it the possible danger of burns from the hot water. The cool mist type costs more initially, but costs less to run. Additives such as Vick's have not proven to be more effective than plain water.
2. If you don't have a vaporizer, you can make steam in other ways; a closed-in bathroom with the hot shower or bath going can make an effective steam bath.
3. Often taking the child outside into damp cool air will produce the same effect (however, protect the face from the wind).

Give the child extra amounts of liquid.

Any child with croup and a fever over 101° should be seen by a doctor.

Any child who makes a croupy sound when they are quiet, or with every breath, should be seen immediately.

Any child who has a bluish color around their mouth or finger tips should be seen immediately.