

Children's Emergency Department (CHED)

Croup Discharge Information Leaflet

Your child has been seen in the Emergency Department and the clinician has assessed that your child may be safely treated at home for their illness. It is quite rare for a child to go on to develop a more dangerous illness.

This leaflet is to advise you about how to manage your child's illness and to help you decide where and when to get further advice or assessment if needed.

What is croup?

Croup is a common childhood illness that can cause a distinctive, bark-like cough. It can also cause difficulty breathing which can be frightening for both you and your child. Croup can be caused by any virus which affects the breathing tubes causing them to swell and become narrower. It usually affects babies and young children between the ages of one and three years old. Some children have croup more than once in their childhood.

What are the signs that a child is significantly unwell with croup?

Unwell young children often have quite alarming signs that are temporary and resolve. **There are some signs that require you to bring your child back to the Emergency Department.**

These are:

- Seems to be getting worse or if you are worried.
- Seems dehydrated (dry mouth, sunken eyes, no tears, drowsy or passing less urine than usual)
- A harsh noise as they breathe in which can be heard all the time (even when they are not upset)

Call 999 if your child:

- Has pauses in their breathing or has an irregular breathing pattern.
- Is too breathless to talk / eat or drink.
- Is becoming drowsy (excessively sleepy)
- Becomes pale, mottled and feels abnormally cold to touch.
- Becomes extremely agitated (crying inconsolably despite distraction), confused or very drowsy (difficult to wake).
- Has laboured/rapid breathing or they are working hard to breathe – drawing in of the muscles below their lower ribs, at their neck or between their ribs.
- Going blue around the lips.
- Is unable to swallow saliva.

What can I do to help my child:

- You can give your child paracetamol or ibuprofen if they seem to be in pain or discomfort e.g., they might have a sore throat.
- Encourage regular small amounts of their favourite drink to keep them well hydrated.

How is croup treated?

Croup is treated with a steroid medicine. This is to reduce the swelling your child has in their breathing passages. The medicine is safe to take and in most cases children only need a single dose before discharge home. This treatment can also be obtained from a GP. Most children are well with croup and only need supportive care with encouragement to take fluids and eat small amounts.

Is it always safe to give my child paracetamol or ibuprofen?

It is always safe to give these medicines unless you have been told not to by a health care professional. You can give these medicines even if your child is not eating or drinking and even if they are vomiting.

If you are going to get your child seen, it is helpful if they have had these medicines before they arrive. Paracetamol and ibuprofen won't interfere with a medical assessment or mask a dangerous illness.

Here are some answers to frequently asked questions about these medicines:

- It is safe to give both medicines to your child if you don't go above the recommended dose for either in a 24-hour period or give them more often than the bottle says you can.
- It is recommended that if you give both you should wait at least an hour after giving the first medicine before deciding to give the second.
- It isn't dangerous to give them together but spacing them out helps by giving a better spread over 24 hours.
- Your child doesn't need to have a fever to benefit from medicines. You should give your child paracetamol or ibuprofen even if they don't have a fever if they seem miserable, in pain or don't want to eat or drink.

We aim to provide the best care for every patient. So, we would like your feedback on the quality of the care you have received from the Hospital. Please visit <http://ratenhs.uk/IQu9vx> Or scan QR Code:

