

# Croup (laryngotracheitis)

## Information for Parents and Caregivers

### What is Croup?

Croup, also known as laryngotracheitis, is caused by a virus that inflames the larynx and subglottic airway which is what causes the classic barking cough.

### Symptoms of Croup

Symptoms include a barky, seal-like cough, congestion, and fever.

### Is Croup Contagious? What is its Duration?

Children with croup are considered contagious up to 3 days after onset or until their fever is gone.

### Treatment & Symptom Management

Most of the time croup can be managed at home. A sick child can sit in the bathroom while a hot shower is running or warm mist air helps improve symptoms. Cold night air or cold freezer air can also help to improve symptoms. Use acetaminophen/ibuprofen to manage symptoms as well as keeping the child hydrated. Often a single dose of steroids by mouth is prescribed. If a child has difficulty breathing or stridor at rest (hearing squeaking sound when child is breathing in or out while at rest - not crying, not active) seek medical attention immediately.

### Prevention

The best way to prevent croup is by thorough hand washing, especially after caring for your child, and being sure your child covers their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

### When Can a Sick Child Return to Day Care, School, and other Social Settings?

A sick child can return to social settings after the fever is gone and the child is able to participate in normal activities.



ALABAMA REGIONAL CENTER FOR INFECTION PREVENTION  
AND CONTROL TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Seattle Children's, Croup, [https://www.seattlechildrens.org/conditions/a-](https://www.seattlechildrens.org/conditions/a-z/croup/#:~:text=Your%20child%20can%20go%20back,and%20colds%20cannot%20be%20prevented.)

[z/croup/#:~:text=Your%20child%20can%20go%20back,and%20colds%20cannot%20be%20prevented.](https://www.seattlechildrens.org/conditions/a-z/croup/#:~:text=Your%20child%20can%20go%20back,and%20colds%20cannot%20be%20prevented.)