

Managing a Croup Attack

Many children get croup. And if your child has a croup attack in the middle of the night, it can be really scary. But that barking cough usually isn't as bad as it sounds. In most cases, croup only lasts a few days, and you can take care of it at home.

Your child will need rest and plenty of fluids, so give sips of water, ice chips, or frozen treats often.

Now, when a croup attack happens, the most important thing is to stay calm and try to soothe your child, because it will help stop the coughing. Crying can make the cough worse.

So here's what you can do. First, hold and gently rock your child. You might also try a little distraction to calm your child. Maybe read a book together or play with a toy.

If you have a cool-mist humidifier, let mist blow on your child's face.

Or, if you don't have a humidifier, fill your bathroom with steam from the shower, and sit in the room with your child for 10 minutes.

And, if the air outdoors is cool, another thing you can try is to go outside with your child. The coolness can help calm the cough.

Keep in mind that even though you've stopped the cough once, it may happen again during the night. So, it's a good idea to stay close by.

As long as you can get your child calmed down again and you're able to stop the coughing, your child should gradually get better over a few days. But if your child is having severe trouble breathing, don't wait.

Get emergency help right away. Severe trouble breathing means your child can't eat or talk because it's so hard to breathe.

Your child's nostrils will flare, the belly will move in and out with every breath, and your child will seem very tired, sleepy, and confused.

Remember, most croup attacks aren't serious. If you can stay calm yourself, it will help your child stay calm and feel better.