

# Croup: Diagnosis and Treatment

When your child breathes in through their mouth and nose, the air goes down into the larynx or voice box and then into the trachea or windpipe on its way to the lungs.

Inside the lungs is a complex system of bronchial tubes that connect to smaller tubes called bronchioles.

Croup is usually caused by viruses, most commonly the parainfluenza virus (PIV). It can happen a few days after the start of a respiratory illness, with symptoms similar to a common cold.

The infection causes the windpipe and voice box to swell.

The swelling limits how much air can pass through the larynx and trachea and into the lungs.

This swelling also causes a loud, barking cough, hoarse voice, and makes it harder for your child to breathe.

Most of the time, croup only lasts a few days and you can take care of it at home.

Sometimes a doctor will give medicine to decrease swelling. Remember, croup is caused by a virus, so antibiotics won't help.

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

You know your child best, so if you have any questions or concerns, call your child's doctor.