

The doctor may decide that it is necessary for your child to be seen in the emergency department and for your child to be admitted to the hospital ward if their breathing problems are severe.

Key points to remember:

Usually no specific treatment is needed for croup and it gets better within three to four days.

Always try to calm your child as much as possible as breathing will be more difficult if your child is upset.

Croup can get worse quickly. If your child is having difficulty breathing then they should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible.

In a severe attack your child needs to be watched closely in a hospital.

Useful contacts

Your GP surgery on:.....
(Please insert surgery number here)

GP Out of Hours: (After 6.30pm and before 8am). Ring 111 and you can speak to a doctor. If necessary, your child can be seen at one of their centres.

Bristol City Walk-in Centre at Broadmead Medical Centre located in Boots
(Mon-Sat 8am-8pm, Sundays and Bank Holidays 11am-5pm) on: **0117 954 9828**

South Bristol NHS Community Hospital Urgent Care Centre
(Every day 8am-8pm) on: **0117 342 9692**
Visit www.nhs.uk to find you nearest centre.

If your child is seriously ill, you may be asked to attend the Children's Hospital emergency department.

For further copies of this leaflet, or if you would like it in other formats or languages, please contact 0117 900 2384.

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Parent's guide to croup



What is croup?

It is a viral infection of the voice box (larynx).

Croup usually affects older babies and pre-school children and is much less common beyond five years of age.

Antibiotics are not used to treat it because it is caused by a virus.

Some children get croup more than once.



What causes croup?

It is usually caused by a viral infection and is most common in the autumn and early spring.

What are the symptoms?

Croup usually starts with a mild fever and runny nose which progresses to a sore throat, hoarse voice and a harsh barking cough.

The barking cough and noisy breathing often start in the middle of the night. When your child breathes in, this may be noisy, high-pitched and squeaky. This is because young children have smaller air passages and inflammation of the voice box leads to narrowing and noisy breathing. The name given to this breathing-in noise is 'stridor'.

Croup develops over one to two days and usually lasts three to four days; the severity and length of the illness varies.

When to contact your GP

- If your child has croup and a high temperature - above 39°C
- If your child appears distressed or ill
- If your child has noise on breathing in (stridor) even when they are sitting quietly or sleeping
- The skin between the ribs and above the collarbone is sucked inwards when your child breathes
- If you are worried for any other reason.

When to call 999

You should call an ambulance immediately if:

- breathing is laboured and your child is becoming exhausted
- your child looks very unwell and becomes drowsy
- your child is drooling and cannot swallow their own saliva
- your child's colour becomes grey or blue (children are usually flushed with croup)
- your child is restless and struggling to get air.

When you phone 999, tell the ambulance if you think your child is having difficulty in breathing.

When your child is seen by the doctor

They will be examined but the doctor may not look at their throat if they think it will cause too much distress.

They may be given some tablets called steroids to help with their breathing.

If your child deteriorates after they have been seen you should call a doctor again or if they develop any of the features listed in "when to call an ambulance" you should call 999.