



KAISER PERMANENTE®

EMERGENCY
DEPARTMENT

Croup

After-Care Instructions

General information

- Croup is a viral infection of the upper airways and larynx (voice box).
- It is most common in children two to four years old.
- The main symptom is a strong cough that sounds like a “seal bark.” There also may be a noise when the child breathes in.
- A fever of 100°-101°F is common. Croup is usually worse at night and may last one to seven days.

Treatment for croup

- If you have a cool air humidifier or vaporizer, turn it on next to the bed during and after an attack.
- During an attack, have the child breathe humidified air.
 - ✓ Bundle up the child and take him or her outside. The cool moist air is helpful.
 - ✓ Take the child into the bathroom, close the door, and steam up the room with a hot shower. Hold the child to reduce the chance of getting a burn by getting too close to the hot water.

When to call Kaiser Permanente

- If the child does not get better over the next 3-4 days.
- If your child starts to complain of ear pain.
- If the cough gets worse.
- If there is a fever that doesn't go away after 48 hours.

When to return to an Emergency Department

- If 20 minutes of steam or cold outdoor air does not relax the child enough to let him or her sleep.
- If breathing becomes more difficult for the child.
- If the child is so short of breath he or she can't talk.
- If the child continues to make a noise when he or she breathes in.
- If the child's fingernails or lips turn blue.
- If the child drools, complains of a bad sore throat or becomes lethargic (won't become fully awake and alert).

Other instructions (if needed):

If you think you have a medical or psychiatric emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital.

Emergency services and care are covered if you were experiencing acute symptoms of sufficient severity, including severe pain, such that you reasonably believed that a failure to obtain immediate medical attention could result in serious jeopardy to health, serious impairment to bodily functions, or serious dysfunction of any bodily organ or part.

For information on this and over 180 other health topics, see your *Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook*. If you need a copy, please call 1-800-464-4000.