

# CROUP

Croup refers to several common respiratory illnesses that affect young children, usually between the ages of 3 months and 3 years, with most illness occurring during the second year of life.

Croup occurs year-round depending upon the virus causing the illness.

**CAUSE** Many different viruses, most commonly parainfluenza virus type 1. Not all persons exposed to the same virus will come down with croup. Since many different viruses can cause the illness, a child may develop croup more than once.

## SYMPTOMS

- Runny nose, sore throat, mild cough, and fever often occur one to several days before the cough starts.
- Croup is characterized by hoarseness and a deepening, non-productive cough.
- Rapid breathing, sitting forward in bed to cough, or making a noise when taking a breath may also occur.
- The child may be better during the day but gets worse at night. The illness lasts 3 to 4 days, but the cough may last longer.
  - Hospitalization may be required if the illness is severe.

**SPREAD** By touching the secretions from the nose or mouth of an infected person and/or touching hands, tissues, or other items soiled with these secretions and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

**INCUBATION** It may take up to 10 days after exposure for early symptoms to develop and several days later for the cough to occur.

**CONTAGIOUS PERIOD** From shortly before symptoms begin and for as long as the acute symptoms last.

**EXCLUSION** Childcare: Until fever is gone for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication and the child is well enough to participate in routine activities. May still have cough.

**DIAGNOSIS** Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider if their child has a high fever, difficulty swallowing or breathing or persistent sore throat or cough.

**TREATMENT** Croup is a viral illness; therefore, antibiotics will not be effective.

*DO NOT GIVE ASPIRIN or SALICYLATE-CONTAINING MEDICATIONS TO ANY CHILD OR ADOLESCENT UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE.*

## PREVENTION/CONTROL

- Cover nose and mouth with tissue when coughing and sneezing or cough/sneeze into your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues.

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after contact with secretions from the nose or mouth.
  - Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.
- Clean and sanitize mouthed toys, objects, and surfaces at least daily and when soiled.

**For more information, please contact your local health department.**

[Carson City Health & Human Services](#) (Carson City, Douglas, Lyon Counties) 775-434-1690 & 775-887-2190 (after hours)

[Central Nevada Health District](#) (Churchill, Mineral, Eureka, Pershing Counties) 775-866-7535

[Northern Nevada Public Health](#) (Washoe County) 775-328-2447 (24 hours)

[Southern Nevada Health District](#) (Clark County) 775-759-1300 (24 hours)

[Division of Public and Behavioral Health](#) (All other Counties) 775-400-0333 (24 hours)

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