

Croup

Dear parent or guardian:

Your child recently may have been exposed to **croup**. Croup is typically a mild respiratory infection caused by a virus. Children with croup typically don't need to stay home from school or childcare. If a child is too sick to take part in normal activities, they should stay home.

Symptoms

Symptoms include a cough that is tight, low-pitched, and barky (sounds like a barking seal). The voice or cry may be hoarse (laryngitis). The child may make a harsh, raspy sound when breathing in (stridor). Loud or continuous stridor noises may indicate severe croup. Croup usually lasts 5–6 days and is often worse at night.

Spread

Like a cold, croup is spreads easily through the air by coughing or sneezing. Surfaces and hands contaminated with mucus or saliva may also spread croup.

Diagnosis and treatment

Parents should always consult with their child's healthcare provider for treatment recommendations. Give extra comfort to reduce crying and ease breathing.

Prevention

Good hand hygiene is the best way to prevent spreading croup:

- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water. Antibacterial soap is not necessary.
- Teach children to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their elbow.
- Throw away tissues after each use.
- Wash your hands after using a tissue.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

Stay up to date on vaccines. Vaccines for children are free in Washington. Contact your child's healthcare provider or find a free vaccine location at tpchd.org/kidsvax.

Learn more

For more info, contact a healthcare provider.