

Croup

What is Croup?

Croup is a common sickness in young kids caused by a virus. It can make their throat and windpipe swell, causing a barking cough and trouble breathing.

This virus is most common in kids aged 6 months to 5 years. It often starts suddenly at night, and symptoms can feel worse during the night.

How did my baby get Croup?

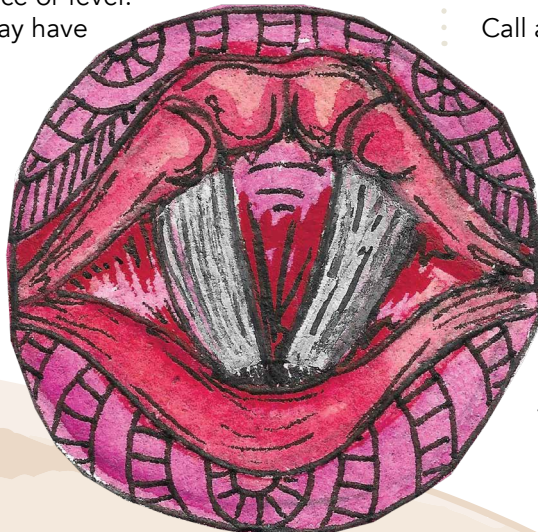
The Croup virus spreads easily through coughs and sneezes. It's the same kind of virus that causes colds. If your baby has been near someone unwell, they might have caught the virus.

How does Croup affect my baby?

At first, croup might seem like a cold, with a runny nose and mild cough. After a day or two, it might get worse, particularly at night time and your baby may:

- Have a barking cough (like a seal).
- Make a high-pitched noise when breathing in (stridor).
- Struggle to breathe (you might see the muscles between their ribs or the space between their collarbones pulling in or nostrils flaring).
- Be restless, upset, or very tired.
- Have a hoarse voice or fever.
- In severe cases may have trouble talking.

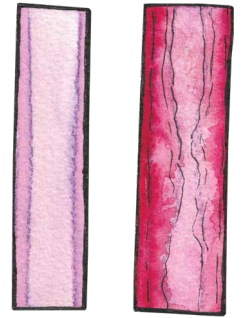
Croup usually lasts 3–4 days, though the cough can last longer.



How can we fix Croup?

Most mild cases of croup get better on their own. A doctor might give your baby a steroid medicine to reduce the swelling in their airway and make it easier to breathe.

- Antibiotics don't help because croup is caused by a virus.
- If croup is severe, your baby may need hospital care to help with breathing.



Caring for your baby at home

For mild croup, you can usually care for your baby at home by:

- Keep them calm. Crying can make breathing harder, so hold them close and comfort them.
- Ease fever. If your baby has a fever, give paracetamol or ibuprofen in the right dose for their age.
- Stay close at night. Croup symptoms can worsen at night, so it's good to be nearby to comfort them.
- Encourage rest and fluids.

When to call an ambulance

Call an ambulance if your baby:

- Struggles to breathe (you see ribs or neck pulling in).
- Has lips or skin turning blue.
- Is very pale, floppy, or can't swallow.

Looking after a sick baby can be hard. Remember, you're not alone. You can always yarn with your family, community, or healthcare workers for help. Aboriginal Health Services and your GP are here to support you and your baby through this time.

Croup usually lasts 3–4 days, though the cough can last longer. If severe breathing difficulties call 000 and ask for an ambulance.