

# HUNTINGTON PLAZA PEDIATRIC GROUP

## CROUP

### **What is CROUP?**

- Croup is a viral illness that causes fever and inflammation of the upper airway.
- When a child has croup, the airway below the vocal cords becomes swollen and narrow. This makes breathing noisy and difficult (stridor) and causes a tight, barking or seal-like cough. The cough is usually worse at night time.
- Your child's barking cough and stridor may appear abruptly in the middle of the night and can be very scary.

### **Who gets it and how long does it last?**

- Some children get croup often, such as whenever they have a respiratory illness.
- Children are most likely to get croup between 6 months and 3 years of age. After age 3, it is not as common because the windpipe is larger, so swelling doesn't cause as much of a problem.
- Croup can occur at any time of the year, but it is most common in the winter.
- Like any viral respiratory infection, it can last for a week, but usually there are 2-3 bad nights of barking cough, and fever usually lasts 72 hours or less.

### **What can I do to help my child?**

- STAY CALM !
- Croup is scary but if you stay calm, your child will stay calm and breathe more comfortably.
- Warm, moist air relaxes the vocal cords and helps to stop the stridor. Run a hot shower in the bathroom with the door closed to get the bathroom all fogged up. Sit with your child for at least 10 minutes in there and then go outside in the cool air to help open up the upper airway.
- Keep a humidifier next to the bed to help humidify the air and make it easier to breathe.
- Use Tylenol, Motrin or Advil to bring down the fever.

### **Don't they need antibiotics or medicine?**

- Like other viruses, antibiotics will not make this illness better.
- Supportive care and fever reduction is your best bet.
- If your child continues to have stridor at rest (as opposed to when agitated like while crying or having a coughing attack) they may need an oral steroid that would be prescribed by the doctor.

### **Call our office if:**

- Your child has stridor at rest or stridor persists despite the warm mist
- Your child has difficulty breathing
- Your child is acting sick

### **Call 911 if:**

- Your child changes color
- Your child is having severe difficulty breathing or is worsening quickly