

## Croup Parent Information Sheet

### **What is Croup?**

Croup is a common viral illness in children under 3 years old. The symptoms are a barking cough and noisy breathing. Children can also have a sore throat, temperature, red eyes, a runny nose, or be off their food. With a cough, the chest may be sucked in when the child breathes in. A “crowing” sound from the throat (stridor) may be heard. The voice is usually hoarse. The difficulty with breathing is worse when the child becomes upset. Croup is often worse at night

### **How long does it last?**

Generally, croup is worse in the first few days of the illness although breathing difficulty and noisy breathing may last up to a week. The cough usually lasts longer.

### **Treatment**

- ¶ Try to calm and comfort your child on your lap
- ⊥ Antibiotics will not help because viruses cause croup
- ¶ Steroid medications reduce airway swelling quickly and are now routinely given to treat croup.
- ⊥ Steam treatment has **not** been shown to work and there is a risk of scalding

### **Seek urgent help if**

- Your child’s breathing worries you
- Your child is drooling and having trouble swallowing saliva
- You notice the chest being sucked in when your child is breathing
- Your child is pale or blue, often after a coughing spell
- Your child is restless, irritable or confused
- You are worried for any other reason.