

**Patient Presentation**

**Viral croup** is an infection of the upper airway, causing inflammation and obstruction of breathing. Typically worsens in late evening / at night.

Most common in children between 6 months and 3 years of age.

Symptoms include:

- Cold-like symptoms (runny nose, [fever](#))
- Barking [cough](#)
- [Hoarseness](#)
- Inspiratory [stridor](#)

**'Red Flag' Signs & Symptoms**

Does the patient present with the following?

- Respiratory distress (eg, recession, grunting, accessory muscle use, tripod position)
- Raised respiratory rate or hypoxia
- High [fever](#)
- Unwell toxic / septic appearance
- [Altered consciousness level](#)
- Drooling
- Sudden onset / rapidly worsening illness

**Investigations**

- Diagnosis usually based on symptoms (above)
- Take temperature, heart rate, pulse volume, respiratory rate, capillary refill time, SpO<sub>2</sub>

**If possible foreign body, call 999 and escalate to Emergency Department**

**Treatment Approach**

- Encourage fluid intake
- Antipyretics may be given for [fever](#)
- Corticosteroid therapy
  - Oral [dexamethasone](#) (150 micrograms / kg) **OR**
  - Nebulised [budesonide](#) (2 mg as a single dose)

**Refer neonates, those with chronic wheeze, repetitive croup, dehydration, deterioration or non-response to medication**

**Croup (paediatric)**

Quick Reference Guide

Access the [full KPP](#) for further information

**Consider escalation of care to the Emergency Department or Specialist Practitioner if required**

Follow local protocols

**Safety Netting Advice**

Seek medical attention if:

- 'Red Flag' signs or symptoms develop
- Failure to improve within expected time frame or improvement not maintained after treatment

**Resources**

Further information for the public:

- [NICE clinical guideline CG160](#)
- [NICE quality standard QS64](#)
- [Croup](#), the NHS website
- [Epiglottitis](#), the NHS website
- [Croup](#), Patient

**Related KPPs**

- [Airways Obstruction](#)
- [Cough](#)
- [Hoarseness](#)
- [Stridor](#)