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 **(((locally relevant website)))**.

# Learn more

For more info, contact a healthcare provider.