

Laryngitis - Viral

Definition

- Viral infection of the voicebox (larynx) and vocal cords

Health Information

Symptoms

- Voice (or cry) is raspy and deeper than usual
- If hoarseness is severe, the child can do little more than whisper
- Cough is often present
- Fever may also occur

Cause

- Most laryngitis in children is caused by a virus. It's usually part of a cold.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Most hoarseness is part of a cold.
- It means the vocal cords are irritated and swollen.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Warm Liquids:

- Age over 1 year. Can sip warm fluids such as chicken broth or apple juice.
- Age over 6 years. Can also suck on cough drops or hard candy. Butterscotch seems to help.
- Age over 8 years. Can also gargle. Use warm water with a little table salt added. A liquid antacid can be added instead of salt. Use Mylanta or the store brand. No prescription is needed.

3. Rest the Voice:

- Avoid yelling and screaming. (Reason: causes vocal cord strain.)
- Have your child try to talk as little as possible. He or she can also write notes for a few days.
- Also, avoid clearing the throat. (Reason: Can make hoarseness worse.)

4. Fever:

- For fevers above 102° F (39° C), give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Note: Lower fevers are important for fighting infections.
- For ALL fevers: Keep your child well hydrated. Give lots of cold fluids.

5. Humidifier:

- If the air in your home is dry, use a humidifier. Reason: Dry air makes hoarseness worse.

6. Avoid Tobacco Smoke:

- Tobacco smoke makes hoarseness and coughing much worse.

7. What to Expect:

- Hoarseness from viral laryngitis lasts 1-2 weeks.

8. Return to School:

- Your child does not need to miss any school for a hoarse voice.
- Your child can go back to school after the fever is gone.

Call Your Doctor If

- Trouble breathing or swallowing occurs
- Hoarseness lasts over 2 weeks
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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