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CROUP.

ITS SYMPTOMS, DANGERS AND TREATMENT.

Croup is a disease of childhood that is at once startling and dangerous. During November and December it is very common and causes great anxiety to parents. The child may go to bed apparently well and wake up at midnight or early morning with a violent, spasmodic, distressing cough. Unchecked, this loud, barking, wheezing coughing and breathing gives great suffering to the little patient. The cough is sometimes loud and deep, like the bark of a dog, or it may be of a loose and choking character. There is usually a high fever and quick pulse, and the child is irritable and shows great fear. An insufficient supply of air entering the lungs, the face and neck become red and deeply suffused, showing danger of suffocation. In fatal cases the lips and face become purple, the lungs congested and the patient actually suffocates. This result, however, is rare, except in cases of membranous or diphtheritic croup. The danger is lessened as the cough becomes looser. The exciting causes are exposure to cold, sudden changes of temperature, wet feet, improper diet. Some patients are predisposed to croup from the narrow formation of throat. Membranous croup is now recognized and treated as diphtheria. It is the most insidious and dangerous type of the disease. The

child may give one or two croupy barks at night and the following day appear as well as ever. The second night the croup may increase and again on the following day the child appear quite well. This may be repeated for a week, or, on the third night, the patient may suddenly show dangerous symptoms. The physician is then hurriedly summoned—often too late to afford any permanent assistance.

Homœopathy offers the quickest and most efficacious treatment for croup known. A few remedies kept in the house will often abort a serious attack and prevent calling the doctor at night.

Aconite is the drug required in the very first stage. The child is not, thirsty and restless, with a deep barking cough. Especially useful if caused by exposure to cold dry wind.

Iodine, if the restlessness is subdued but high fever, with cough, continues

Spongia has similar symptoms to Iodine: wheezing and a choking cough may be present.

Kali Bi. is the remedy par excellence for a hard metallic croup cough, without any fever present. This drug will often act like magic.

Hepar sulph is to be given only when the cough has a decidedly loose edge. If given too soon in croup it may cause the cough to tighten again.

Other remedies that might be useful are Bella, Ferrum Phos, Sanguinaria or Sambucus.

In spasmodic croup great relief may be obtained by the application of cold water cloths to the throat, care being taken to protect the chest. Sometimes hot water fomentations may be more useful than cold. The diet must be plain and easily digested. Whenever diphtheria is in the neighborhood, and a child develops a croupy cough, immediate advice should be taken. Membranous or diphtheritic croup requires prompt and careful treatment and will be considered under diphtheria.

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