



# Intervertebral Disc Disorder

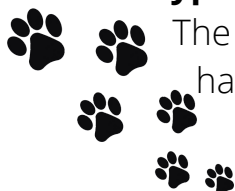
Intervertebral Disc Disorder "IVDD" is one of the most common causes of back pain in our canines and can lead to pain, reduced mobility, and quality of life. It is important to take action as soon as you suspect your dog may have IVDD to avoid serious symptoms.

## What is IVDD?

IVDD is a degenerative disease affecting intervertebral discs, which are found between the bony vertebra in the spine. It is very similar to a bulging or herniated disc in a human spine, as well as degenerative disc disease in human spine pain. These discs are composed of fibrocartilage, that act like cushions and shock absorbers for the spine, that also allow for the variety of motions the spine can move in. IVDD is classified into Type I or Type II for dogs, which help identify the cause and the best treatment options.

**Type I** generally occur after a high-impact activity, and symptoms come on very rapidly.

The dogs effected are normally those with short legs and long backs. **Type II** tend to happen more gradually with no triggering event, as discs become harder and less flexible.



## Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms can vary significantly due to the amount of pressure the disc may be creating, placement of the injury and how much disruption of the nerve signal is occurring. Common symptoms can include:

- Neck or Back pain
- Hunched posture
- Sensitivity to touch
- Pelvic limb weakness
- Unsteadiness
- Anxious behavior
- Inability to stand
- Inability to move pelvic limbs
- Impaired bowel and/or bladder control.



## How is it diagnosed?

A veterinarian will make the diagnosis of IVDD, it will be based on an examination, radiographs and will likely require a referral to a neurologist. At that time, based on the dogs symptoms, and severity of IVDD they will discuss whether it can be managed with or without surgery. Typically acute sudden and severe onset (Type I) will require surgery while more gradual changes (Type II) can be managed conservatively. Either way physical rehabilitation with a certified canine rehabilitation therapist is recommend for a successful recovery plan.



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## Surgery, Rehabilitation or Both?

**Surgery** should be completed by a board-certified neurologist, their main goal is to help relieve the compression at the nerve roots and/or spinal cord. Typically followed by a period of crate rest and medication to help control pain and swelling.

**Conservative management** will also likely include crate rest, and medication along with a rehabilitation program. With or without surgery, a program developed with and supervised by a certified canine rehabilitation therapist can make a meaningful difference in your dog's recovery.

## How will rehab help?

No matter which treatment route your dog is on rehabilitation plays a very important role in their recovery. Treatment will include neurodevelopment sequencing techniques, which is teaching them how to effectively and efficiently move their body again, step by step. A certified canine rehabilitation therapist can help guide you through short and long term management, strengthening exercises and provide manual therapies to improve your dog's quality of life.

Home modifications can also offer simple and safe changes to make your dog's environment easier on their joints such as providing more surfaces with traction such as rugs on hard floors, orthopedic dog beds for comfortable rest time, as well as ramps to reach the couch.



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