



Pawsitive Steps Canine Rehab

Putting the pep back in your pup's
step

Intervertebral Disc Disorder

405-367-5732
Canine
Rehabilitation
Services

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?

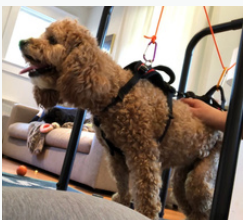
IVDD is a degenerative disease affecting intervertebral discs, which are found between the bony vertebra in the spine. It is very similar to a bulging or herniated disc in a human spine, as well as degenerative disc disease in human spine pain. These discs are composed of fibrocartilage, that act like 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. We focus on neuromuscular re-education which is getting the nerves to fire and muscles to "remember" how to move. Initially, it is a very hands-on phase, using electrical stimulation, balance, training, weight bearing and other modalities such as body weight support treadmill training, laser, and pulsed electromagnetic wave. We may use supportive devices such as harnesses and wheelchairs while working on gait training, or just work on small activities to work on balance and control. Each and every case is different, which is why a skilled practitioner is vital. I have specialized in human physical therapy for individuals with spinal cord injury for over 17 years and have seen great results with my canine clients. Even after an evaluation, we can help you determine what equipment and home modifications can be made to optimize your pup's recovery. During our evaluation, we determine what exercises should be done and walk you through the exercises. Within 48 hours of the evaluation, we will send you a link to a portal that has the prescribed pictures and videos for you to continue to do exercises at home. THE HOME EXERCISE PROGRAM IS THE BIGGEST COMPONENT OF SUCCESS. CARRYOVER IS ESSENTIAL. Some components, such as body weight support treadmill training and whole body vibration can only be performed at our clinic due to inability to transport.



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Mobile and Clinic (Waterloo Animal Hospital)
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