

# INTERVERTEBRAL DISC DISEASE (IVDD)

*Sage Canine Rehabilitation Center*



## UNDERSTANDING INTERVERTEBRAL DISC DISEASE (IVDD)

IVDD is a condition that affects the spinal discs in dogs, causing pain, discomfort, and, in severe cases, paralysis. These discs act as cushions between the vertebrae in the spine, and they can degenerate or herniate, leading to compression of the spinal cord or nerve roots.

## TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR IVDD

The treatment approach for IVDD depends on the severity of the condition and your dog's overall health. Here are the primary treatment options:

**Medical Management:** Mild cases of IVDD may respond well to conservative treatment, which includes rest, anti-inflammatory medications, and pain management. Crate confinement and limited activity are often recommended.

**Surgery:** In more severe cases or when conservative treatments are ineffective, surgery may be necessary. There are two main surgical options:

- **Hemilaminectomy:** This procedure involves removing part of the vertebrae to relieve pressure on the spinal cord.
- **Ventral Slot:** This technique involves accessing the disc from the front of the spine and removing the herniated material.

**Physical Rehabilitation:** After surgery or during recovery from mild cases, physical therapy and rehabilitation can play a vital role in helping your dog regain strength and mobility.

**Pain Management:** Managing pain is a critical aspect of IVDD treatment, and your veterinarian will recommend appropriate pain medications to keep your pet comfortable.

## SIGNS THAT YOUR DOG MAY BE SUFFERING FROM IVDD INCLUDE:

- **Back pain:** Your dog may arch their back, cry out in pain, or become sensitive to touch along the spine.
- **Limping or weakness:** Weakness or paralysis in the rear limbs or all four limbs can occur.
- **Loss of coordination:** Difficulty walking or maintaining balance.
- **Reluctance to move:** Your dog may be less active, refuse to jump, or have difficulty getting up and down.
- **Changes in bowel and bladder function**

**The severity of these symptoms can vary, and early detection and intervention are crucial for a successful outcome.**







## PREVENTING IVDD

While not all cases of IVDD can be prevented, below are ways to help reduce the risk of IVDD:

- Maintain a healthy weight for your dog to minimize stress on the spine.
- Avoid activities that involve jumping or high-impact movements, especially for breeds prone to IVDD.
- Use ramps or steps to help your dog access furniture or vehicles to reduce the risk of injury.

**If you notice any of the symptoms mentioned above or have concerns about your dog's spinal health, please reach out to our clinic!**



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**Physical therapy or rehabilitation for IVDD is a comprehensive and patient-specific approach that aims to improve function, reduce pain, and enhance the overall well-being of dogs affected by this condition. It requires collaboration between the physical therapist, veterinarian, and patient or pet owner to achieve the best possible outcome.**

### Physical Therapy Treatment for IVDD:

**Pain Management:** Therapists use various modalities like LASER and electrical stimulation to reduce pain and inflammation in the affected area. Medications prescribed by a veterinarian may also be part of the pain management strategy.

**Passive Range of Motion (PROM) Exercises:** involves gently moving the affected joints and limbs to maintain flexibility and prevent muscle contractures. Therapists use manual techniques to guide the patient through these movements, as excessive strain on the spine should be avoided.

**Core Strengthening:** Provides stability to the spine and reduces pressure on the affected discs. Therapists design exercises that focus on the abdominal and back muscles, gradually increasing the intensity as the patient's condition improves.

**Hydrotherapy:** Hydrotherapy, such as underwater treadmill sessions, can be beneficial for IVDD patients. The buoyancy of water reduces the impact on the spine while providing resistance for muscle strengthening and promoting cardiovascular health.

**Balance and Coordination Training:** IVDD can affect balance and coordination. Physical therapists may incorporate balance exercises to help patients regain control and stability, reducing the risk of falls or further injury.

**Assistive Devices:** Depending on the severity of the condition, patients may be provided with assistive devices like harnesses, or wheelchairs to aid in mobility while minimizing stress on the spine.