Intervertebral Disk Disease

What is Intervertebral Disk Disease?

Intervertebral Disk Disease (IVDD) is a form of severe spinal cord trauma. Disk rupture is among the most common neurologic conditions seen in dogs, especially Dachshunds and other small breed dogs.

The normal disk that sits below the spinal cord can harden and rupture to compress the spinal cord and nerves. The predominant signs are pain and weakness. In many cases the signs start suddenly and may not even be associated with activity or trauma.

Severe weakness leading to paralysis can happen quickly, necessitating rapid diagnosis and treatment to prevent irreversible paralysis. Many affected pets will return to normal activity with early intervention and proper care.

How is IVDD Diagnosed?

The diagnosis of IVDD is made by imaging the spinal cord. MRI scanning is particularly helpful in these patients as a non-invasive and highly accurate method of diagnosis. Sometimes a myelogram with a CT scan of the spine is performed to evaluate large portions of the spinal cord quickly or for changes due to trauma or spinal instability.
How is IVDD Treated?

The most important aspect of treatment is surgical de-compression, and is indicated in animals with severe pain, weakness or paralysis. Surgical results are typically very good, with over 85% or more of affected patients regaining the ability to walk over several weeks or sooner if pain sensation is present prior to the surgery.

When dealing with IVDD, the key to a successful outcome is having your pet evaluated as soon as possible after signs of weakness or pain are noticed, so that determination for appropriate treatment can be made before further damage occurs.

MedVet Chicago

Consider the doctors and staff at MedVet Chicago an extension of your primary veterinarian’s patient care team. We believe in a collaborative approach to patient care and work directly with your primary care veterinarian in developing a treatment plan that is the best fit for your pet’s individual health needs.

Offering board-certified specialists in 13 veterinary specialties, the team at MedVet Chicago is available 24-hours a day, every day of the year, ensuring that care is always available for your pet when they need it the most.

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