

Disc disease is more common in short-legged and small breeds of dogs. It is believed to be a genetic problem. A reputable breeder may significantly decrease the chances of your dachshund being born with disc disease.

Canine rehabilitation: After 8 weeks of conservative treatment or days after surgery, your dog may benefit from canine rehabilitation by a certified canine rehabilitation therapist to help rebuild strength, coordination and proper foot placement if necessary. Home therapy is also an option.



Chiropractic therapy: Spinal adjustments are not recommended for IVDD dogs. Drs. Isaacs and Galle, DVM, ACVIM (Neurology) write: "the risk with performing a chiropractic adjustment on these dogs is that it could cause more disk material to herniate and further compress the spinal cord. This could lead to a deterioration in neurologic function (i.e. weaker, paralyzed), necessitating emergency surgery."

Acupuncture and laser therapy help relieve pain and stimulate nerves to heal and they can be started at any time during conservative treatment or post-op.

Rescue groups: If an owner is unable to care for a disabled dachshund, some rescue groups will take surrendered paralyzed dachshunds and provide medical services and foster care.

DodgersList contacts: For quick answers / want to talk?

- Linda: (972) 294-5512 – Texas
email: lstowe@dodgerslist.com
- Adele: (262) 781-4044 – Wisconsin
- Cris: (920) 470-2145 – Wisconsin
- Jan: (517) 676-0051 – Michigan
- Sue: (517) 782-2661 – Michigan
- Geri: (917) 941-7219 – New York City
- Cindy: (636) 329-0040 – St. Louis

Veterinary Contacts:



Dodgerslist teams up with veterinarians to educate



Disclaimer: This information is presented for educational purposes and as a resource for the Dachshund community. The coordinators are not veterinarians or health care professionals. Nothing herein should be interpreted as medical advice and all should contact their pet-care professionals for advice. The coordinators are not responsible for the substance and content contained herein and do not advocate any particular product, item, or position contained herein.
Copyright Dodgerslist.com
rev. April 19, 2012

1 in 5 Dachshunds will suffer back problems



Will you be prepared?

Intervertebral Disc Disease

Dogs can live a pain-free, happy life with disc disease!



Website and e-mail list offering education and support for the owners of all breeds who suffer from disc disease

Dodgerslist gathers information on current treatments for IVDD. Approximately 1 in 5 Dachshunds are born with disc disease; also other small breed dogs are prone to IVDD. The website information reflects what is commonly recommended by experts in the neurology, orthopedic and physical therapy fields. As with any treatment, there is no replacement for good, quality veterinary care.

Premature aging of the disc: The outer wall of the disc is made of flexible cartilage. Disc disease causes discs to prematurely age and no longer able to cushion and bounce back as the spine moves. The pressure during movement causes the disc to tear causing pain and the potential for paralysis. Dogs born with disc disease will typically start showing evidence of disc problems between 3-7 years of age; but, disc problems can happen at any age. At the first signs of pain, immediately crate your dog and get to an IVDD knowledgeable vet in order to limit damage to the spinal cord.

- Minimizing back problems:** There are several things you can do that may minimize the risk of disc problems:
- ◆ Regular exercise is important to keep them sleek and streamlined as dachshunds were meant to be. Additional weight puts more stress on the spine.
 - ◆ Lift your dachshund using two hands, one supporting the chest and one supporting the rear end.
 - ◆ Limit your dachshund's use of stairs and discourage jumping on and off furniture.
 - ◆ Use of ramps is strongly encouraged.
 - ◆ Use a harness rather than a collar.

Identifying back problems: It's important to note that x-rays do not always confirm the presence of a back problem and often, where a calcification appears on the x-ray, is not where a disc has herniated. An MRI, CT, or myelogram is the only sure way to see a herniation and the spinal cord. At the first sign of any one of these symptoms, crate your dog to protect the spinal cord and get to a vet knowledgeable about disc disease (IVDD):

- Crying when eating or drinking (neck)
- Yelping when moved
- Shaking or trembling
- Poor appetite due to general pain or from chewing
- Muscle spasms, reluctance to move due to pain
- Head held high or nose to the ground (neck)
- Reluctance to move, jump, or go up/down stairs
- Tense abdomen (called referred pain) can mimic the symptoms of other diseases
- Hunched appearance

It is an emergency when these functions are lost:

- One or both front legs become lame
- Total paralysis of rear legs
- Loss of bladder and bowel control

As damage to the spinal cord progresses, there is a predictable deterioration of functions:

1. Pain
2. Wobbly walking, legs cross
3. Nails scuffing floor
4. Paws knuckle
5. Paralysis
6. Bladder and bowel control are lost
7. Tail wagging with joy is lost
8. Deep pain sensation (DPS) is lost



Do not ever lose hope: Healing may take place for months after crate rest as nerves can take a long time to regenerate. So, always have HOPE. Those who don't regain the ability to walk eventually will enjoy life using a cart.

Treatment

Non-surgical conservative treatment: A high percentage of dogs are able to recover with conservative treatment, when owners are diligent about 100% STRICT crate rest, 24/7, for a full 8 weeks. Conservative treatment takes time to let the body reabsorb the disc material which relieves the pressure on the spinal cord which, in turn, allows the nerves to heal and function again. An anti-inflammatory is used to reduce swelling and a pain reliever gives comfort until all the swelling is gone. The hallmark component of conservative treatment is 8 weeks of strict rest to allow the disc to heal and form good secure scar tissue.

Surgery can still be successful many times if surgery is performed within 12-24 hours after losing deep pain (DPS) the last neuro function in the spinal cord. The spinal cord is very fragile and the chance of a complete recovery is less with each hour that passes. Surgery immediately removes the offensive disc material and relieves the pressure on the spinal cord. With surgery, because the disc material has been removed, PT can be started as soon as the surgeon directs during 6 weeks of post-op crate rest. Surgical costs vary widely across the country from \$3,000 to \$8,000 to include a CT, MRI or myelogram, the surgery, and the hospital stay. Seek a board-certified neuro (ACVIM) or ortho (ACVS) surgeon. You may need a referral to these specialists from your vet. Check out www.carecredit.com for no- or low-interest credit.

100% STRICT crate rest 24/7 is critical at the first sign of a back problem & during recovery. Crate or ex-pen area should be approximately 1.5 x 2.5 times the body length. Carry the dog to and from the potty place. Limit potty-time footsteps with use of a 6' leash and harness OR limit with a 6' diameter ex-pen.

