

# Return 2 Motion

A dog's spine is made up of small bones called vertebrae that protect the spinal cord. In between these vertebrae are intervertebral disks (IVD), which serve as cushions during movement. Sometimes these disks can harden and press painfully against the spinal cord, leading to a condition called Intervertebral disk disease (IVDD).

The predominant signs of IVDD are pain and weakness, but this can progress to more severe signs, like paralysis. In many cases these signs start suddenly and may not even be associated with activity or trauma, especially for overweight or at-risk breeds. The most common breeds that are pre-disposed to IVDD are Dachshunds (Doxens), Pugs, Beagles, Pekinese, and Lhasa Apso, but can also be seen in large breed dogs, such as German Shepherds and Labrador Retrievers.

Although x-rays can show evidence of calcified (hardened) disks, and IVD space narrowing, definitive diagnosis of IVDD is achieved via advanced imaging, such as an MRI.

For mild cases, medical management is often recommended. This form of treatment includes cage rest, anti-inflammatories, pain medications, laser therapy, acupuncture, and physical therapy. For severe cases, however, surgery with post-operative rehabilitation is the recommended treatment.

Prognosis can be variable, but in general, success rates with surgery range from 50-90%, depending on if deep pain perception is present or not. Many affected pets with mild signs will return to normal activity with early intervention and proper care.