

4 Phases of Healing **ROADMAP**
During a Disc Episode

1. PAIN relief

happens in approximately an hour with correct dose, frequency and combo of pain meds. Prompt phone feedback to the vet is essential in getting pain relief meds properly adjusted for dose and frequency.

MEDS: A combo to address the 3 sources of pain. Rx'd for every 8 hrs round the clock control:

- Tramadol- general pain relief
- Methocarbamol- muscle spasm pain
- Gabapentin-nerve pain
- Amantadine an extra dimension of relief for severe pain

Signs of pain:

- yelping
- trembling or shaking
- arched back
- reluctance to move
- tight/tense stomach
- holding a leg up and not wanting to use it
- dog's personality is not back...not interested in things
- head held in an unusual position...head down or nose up high
- panting

2. SWELLING reduction

in the spinal cord may take anywhere from 7-30 days before all painful swelling is proved absent.

Danger: Never give a NSAID with a steroid. 5-7 day washout needed with switches:

1. NSAID <-> NSAID
2. Steroid <-> NSAID

MEDS: There are two classes of drugs to bring down swelling in the spinal cord.

1. **NSAID (non-steroid anti-inflammatory drug)**
 - Rimadyl.
 - Metacam, and others
2. **Steroids**
 - Prednisone/ Prednisolone,
 - Dexamethasone, and others

Stomach protection:

1. **Pepcid AC (famotidine)** suppresses stomach acids anti-inflammatories cause in order to avoid bleeding ulcers.

Adverse signs needing prompt vet help:

- Not eating or drinking
- Vomiting or w/blood
- Diarrhea or w/blood

2. Washout period of 5 to 7 days to protect the GI tract should there be a need to switch between NSAID brands or NSAID <-> steroid. For emergencies w/o a washout, sucralfate is added to Pepcid AC for double GI tract protection.

3. DISC DAMAGE

Takes 8 weeks during conservative treatment to self heal with 100% STRICT rest.

NO MEDS heal discs

Movements to avoid with conservative treatment::

- baths
- sleeping with you
- sitting on your lap
- sniff fests at potty time
- Chiropractic therapy
- water therapy
- eating outside the crate
- dragging legs around

Note: post-op dogs under the direction of the surgeon can begin PT, water therapy soon after surgery. PT is always deliberate, purposeful and under control. Post-op crate rest is usually for 6 weeks.

4. NEURO FUNCTION

Repair time has no time limit. Best to think in terms of months rather than days-week.

Nerves are the slowest part of the body to self repair.

NO MEDS heal nerves

Therapies::

- Laser light therapy
- Acupuncture

Acupuncture and Laser Therapy

stimulate the cell's metabolism that leads to the body's natural repair abilities and can be started as soon as possible.

NOTE: Laser light therapy contraindicated with tumors.

Anytime out of the recovery suite is a dangerous time for the early healing disc during conservative treatment. Movement of the back/neck can increase a disc tear. For an animal with no or very mild neuro deficits, the risk of transporting to therapy has to be carefully weighed against what benefit is to be gained. Seek a mobile vet.