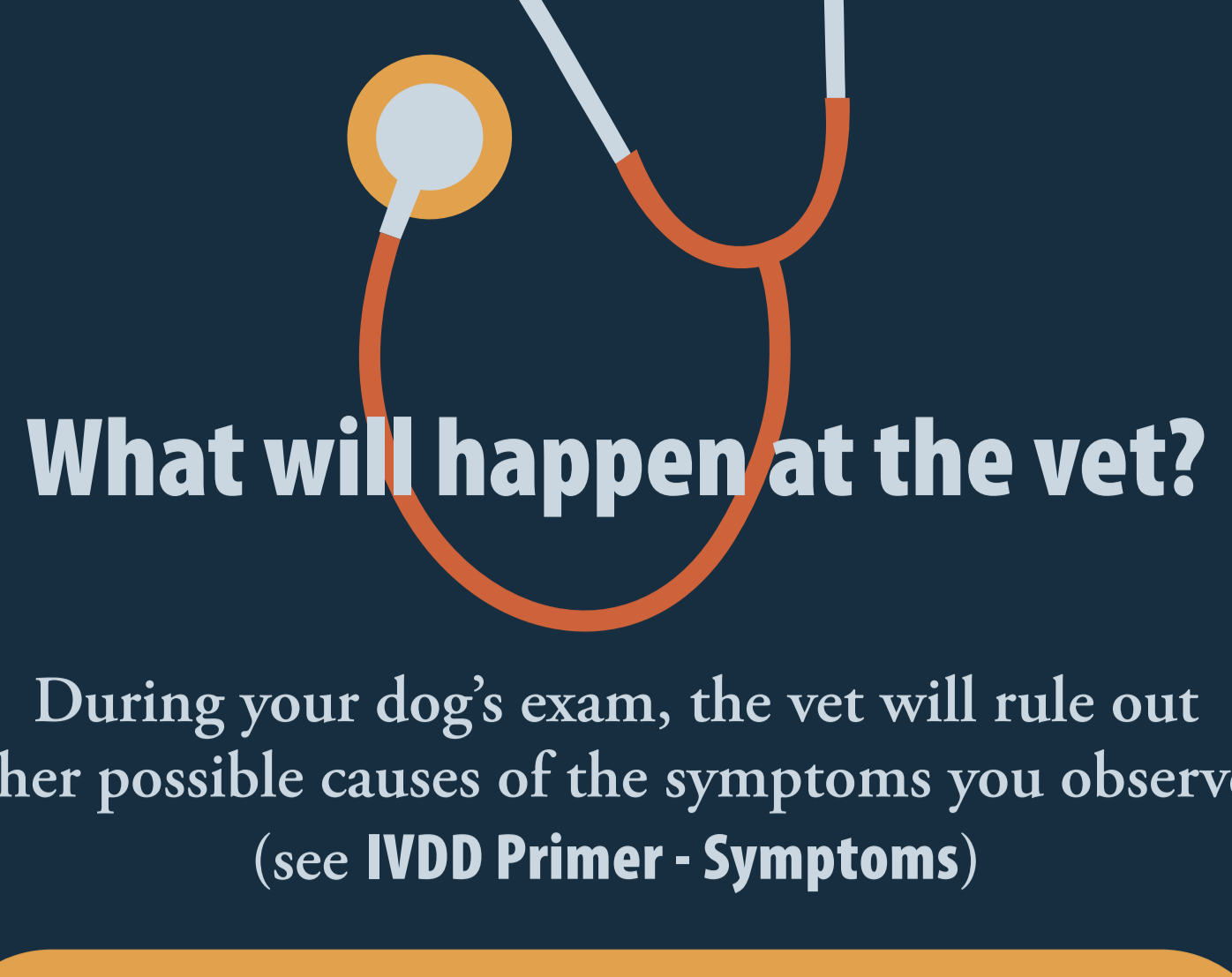


IVDD

what are the options?



What will happen at the vet?

During your dog's exam, the vet will rule out other possible causes of the symptoms you observed (see **IVDD Primer - Symptoms**)

other possible causes include:
infections, trauma, tumors, blood clots, fractures, myelopathy

do I need diagnostic imaging?

x-ray

can rule out other causes and can show disc calcifications and narrowed spaces between vertebrae, but is not definitive



myleogram

a special dye is injected, allowing greater detail of the spine to be seen than with normal radiographs



mri

identifies exactly where, and how severe, the cord compression is, but it is only necessary if the dog is having surgery



CT scan

similar to the mri, with the added benefit of viewing cross-sections of the spine

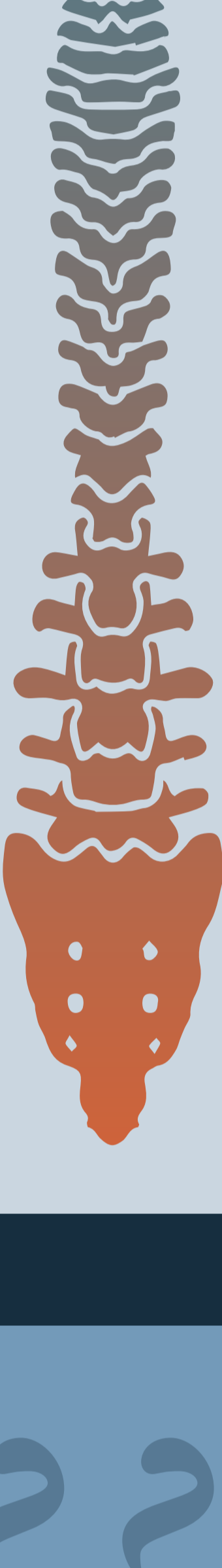


WARNING! scans can require sedation, which puts the disc at risk of further protrusion.

Your vet will also try to determine where your dog is on the

neurological function scale

Function is most commonly impaired in this order:



- Pain when disc tears**
- Wobbly walking, legs cross**
- Ability to place feet impaired (nails scuff the floor)**
- Paws "knuckle" (dog cannot tell when paws are turned under and is slow to, or cannot, correct them)**
- Paralysis (legs dragging)**
- Loss of bladder control**
- Loss of ability to wag tail when happy**
- Loss of deep pain sensation or "DPS" (diagnosable only by a neuro vet, ACVIM, or ortho vet, ACVS)**

Surgery can still be successful 12 - 24 hours after loss of DPS. Even after that window, there can still be a **good outcome**, but each hour that passes decreases that chance.

SURGERY vs CONSERVATIVE

which should I choose?

Note that neither route is guaranteed to work.

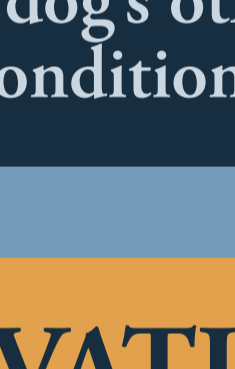
Most dog owners make their choice based on



financial considerations



where the dog is on the neuro function scale



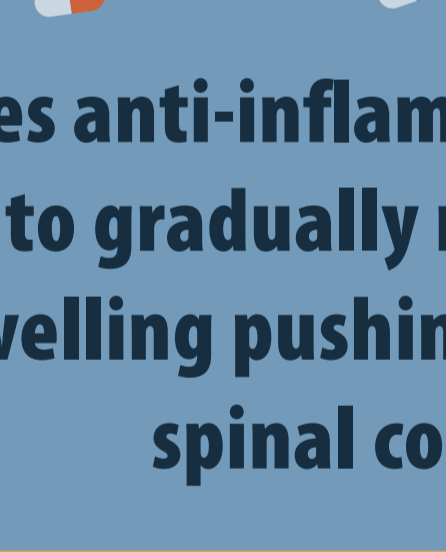
the dog's other conditions

SURGERY

CONSERVATIVE



uses surgery to immediately remove disc material pushing on the spinal cord



uses anti-inflammatories to gradually reduce swelling pushing on the spinal cord



post-op, crate rest for 4 - 6 weeks



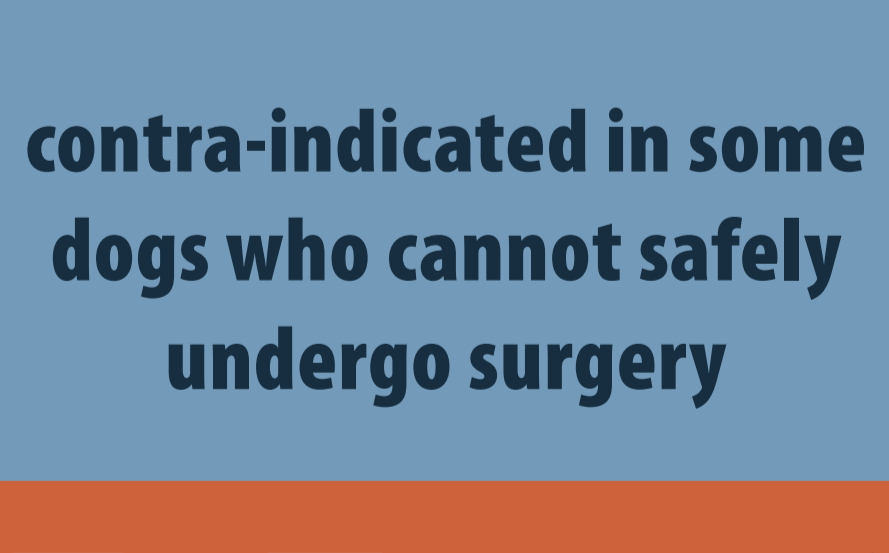
STRICT crate rest for 8 weeks

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costs several thousand dollars

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cost of medications only



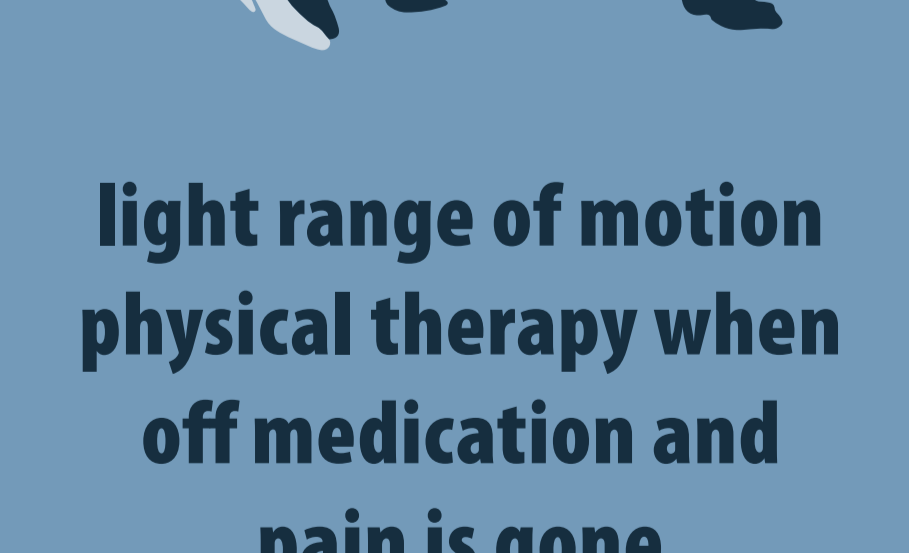
contra-indicated in some dogs who cannot safely undergo surgery



all IVDD dogs are candidates



physical therapy can begin right away with surgeon's approval



light range of motion physical therapy when off medication and pain is gone



Beware of the vet who pushes surgery or euthanasia as the only options.

They are not.

Just because you do not (or cannot) choose surgery does not mean your dog doesn't have a **good chance of recovery.**

Nor does it mean you love your dog any less. ❤️

IT IS OKAY TO GET A SECOND OPINION.

*my dog is home, now what?
how do I care for a dog that should not move?*

continued in "IVDD Primer - Crate Rest"

This information is intended for general knowledge only and is not a substitute for professional veterinary advice, diagnosis or treatment, nor is it intended to replace consultation with a qualified veterinarian.