

**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 (meds, STRICT rest and time) or after a surgery, your dog may benefit from underwater treadmill therapy to help rebuild strength, coordination and proper paw placement if necessary. Home therapy is also an option. **LEARN MORE** Use search term "[water therapy](#)" in the [dodgerslist.com](#) orange search bar.



**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. These therapies can be started at any time post-op. There are also home-visit mobile vets. Conservatively treated dogs require STRICT rest in order to heal the disc.

**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:** Want to talk? Linda's email: [lindox5@yahoo.com](mailto:lindox5@yahoo.com)

Disclaimer: This information is presented for educational purposes 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. 1/24/2026

## IVDD Disc Tips

A recovery suite with room service (wire crate, child's Pak N Play, ex-pen) provides the right, protected environment for a healing disc after a surgery or during conservative treatment.

Often a surgeon will want 4-6 weeks of rest in a recovery suite plus the PT he directs while the surgery areas are healing.

Conservative treatment (meds, rest & time) heals the disc when there is STRICT 24/7 limited movement of the back a recovery suite provides. The time for disc healing is 8 weeks.

### Lift and carry

Protect the IVDD dog's back.

Always support both ends. Keep the back horizontal to the ground.



### Potty times during an episode

Use a 6 foot leash attached to a harness for dogs who do have bladder control (no more collars) and a sling to stabilize a wobbly dog.

Stand in one spot to minimize dog

taking the very fewest of footsteps possible.

Alternative to a leash and harness: Use a 6 ft diameter ex-pen in the grass as a potty area.

### Feeding bowls

Attach food and water bowls to the crate at head height to minimize bending down to eat and drink.

Always provide access to fresh water. Dogs on steroids will be thirsty.

### Wheelchair

Many dogs never need a cart. Wait until the rest recovery period is complete before assessing whether to invest in a wheelchair or continued post surgery physical therapy. Nerve healing is slow and can take 6 to 12 months or longer.

**SEE ALL TIPS** Use the search term "[recovery suite tips](#)" in the [dodgerslist.com](#) orange search bar.

Back problems are more common in short-legged and small breed dogs



**Will you be prepared?**

# Intervertebral Disc Disease

Dogs can live a pain-free, happy life with disc disease! IVDD is not a death sentence.



Website offering IVDD 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 4 Dachshunds are born with disc disease. Other small breed dogs are also prone to IVDD. The dodgerslist.com 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 vet care. It's important to

**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 as early as one year old. 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 which may minimize the risk of disc problems:

- Regular exercise is important to keep them sleek and streamlined as dogs are meant to be. Additional weight puts more stress on the spine.
- Lift your dog using two hands, one supporting the chest and one supporting the rear end.
- Limit your dog's use of stairs and discourage jumping on and off furniture.
- Use of ramps is strongly encouraged.
- Use a harness with leashes rather than a collar.

**100% STRICT rest 24/7** is critical at the first sign of a back problem & during disc healing. The recovery suite should be only large enough to stand up, turn around easily and fully stretch out legs when lying down. Carry the dog to and from the potty place. Limit potty-time footsteps with use of a 6 foot leash and harness OR limit with a 6 foot diameter ex-pen.



**Identifying back problems:** note that x-rays do not confirm the presence of a back problem. 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 as prep for a surgery. 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)
- Head held high or nose to the ground (neck)
- Yelping when moved
- Shaking or trembling
- Hunched appearance
- Poor appetite from general pain or chewing
- Muscle spasms, reluctance to move due to pain
- Reluctant to move, jump, or go up/down stairs
- Tense abdomen (called referred pain) can mimic the symptoms of other diseases

**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 step-by-step deterioration of nerve function:

1. Pain
2. Wobbly walking, legs cross
3. Nails scuffing floor
4. Paws knuckle under
5. Leg 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:** Nerve healing may take place for many months after the STRICT rest period has healed the disc. Nerves can take a long time to regenerate. Always have HOPE. Those who don't regain the ability to walk, enjoy life using a wheelchair.

## Two Treatments

**Non-surgical conservative treatment:** A high percentage of dogs are able to recover with conservative treatment, when owners are diligent about 100% STRICT 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. In addition an anti-inflammatory is used to help reduce painful pressure and cord swelling over the course of 7-30 days. A combo of pain relievers 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. During the exam your vet will rule out other problems that could mimic a disc problem. 100% STRICT rest and medications are an alternative to imaging and a surgery. [Browse all IVDD info.](#) Use the search term "[conservative treatment](#)" in the [dodgerslist.com orange search bar.](#)

**Surgery** immediately removes offensive disc material to relieve the pressure on the spinal cord. The spinal cord still has the best chance to self heal nerves if a surgery can be performed within 12-24 hours after losing deep pain sensation (DPS) the last neuro function of the spinal cord. The spinal cord is very fragile and the chance of a complete recovery is less with each hour that passes. With surgery, because the disc material has been removed, PT can be started as soon as the surgeon directs during 4-6 weeks of post-op crate rest. Surgical costs vary widely across the country from \$3,000 to \$10,000 to include a CT, MRI or myelogram, the surgery, and the hospital stay. Seek a board-certified neurosurgeon (ACVIM) or surgeon (ACVS) for this most delicate of surgeries. You may need a referral to these specialists from your vet. Check out [www.carecredit.com](#) for no- or low-interest credit.