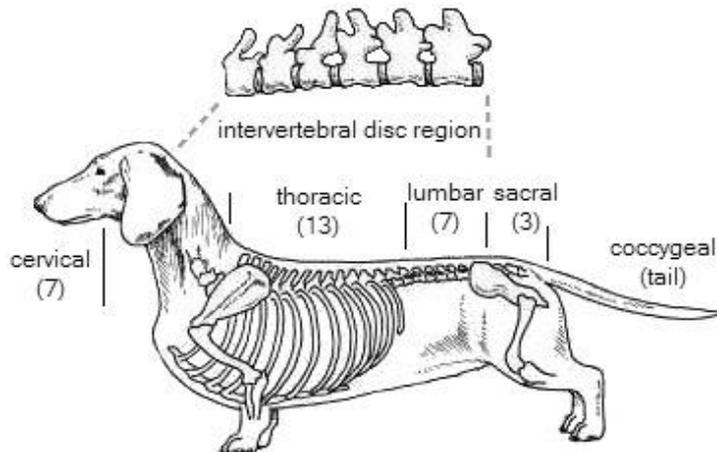




WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK!

Surgical 101



What has happened to my dog? Well, your dog has just been diagnosed with IVDD, Intervertebral Disc Disease; a genetic disease which now effects 1:4 dachshunds. What does this mean? It means that in some area of your dog's spine, surrounding the vertebrae, calcification has developed around the discs. This has now caused pressure on the spinal cord, and as a result, has manifested itself in showing the signs and symptoms that your dachshund was displaying. These symptoms would have been categorized, and your dachshund would have been diagnosed anywhere from Stage One, being the least affected, to Stage Five, where complete paralysis was evident. The following algorithm shows the different stages of IVDD and the prognosis.

The different stages of IVDD diagnosis

(Ref:

<https://sites.google.com/site/ukdachshundhealthreport/home/news/willmydachshundrecoverfromabackproblem>)

IVDD Diagnosis and Prognosis

Pain Response Grade	Response to veterinary examination	Description	Prognosis with medical/conservative treatment	Prognosis with surgical treatment
1	Pain	Dog can feel pain in its legs and toes	90% chance of successful recovery	90%
2	Ambulatory Paraparesis	Dog can still walk, but weak/ wobbly	90%	90%
3	Nonambulatory Paraparesis	Dog can move legs but needs support to stand up	70%	90%
4	Paraplegic	Paralysis - no movement in the legs	50%	80-90%
5	Paraplegic, Absent Deep Pain Perception	Paralysis - no movement in the legs and dog can't feel its toes	<5%	<24 hrs: 50% 24-48 hrs ??? >48 hrs <5%

ABN 90 194 829 059

E: teamdisa@ivdd.org.au

www.ivdd.org.au

Why did my dog need IVDD surgery?

The reason your dog has required surgery is, after a thorough neurological assessment with the specialist vet, it was felt that surgery would provide the best prognosis to help your dog get back up on all four paws and walk again in the future. The procedure is done to clear out and clean out any spinal debris which surrounds the herniated disc applying pressure to the spinal cord. Sometimes the surgeon also puts a window into the vertebral disc, known as fenestration, to avoid future re-occurring episodes. It sadly is not unheard of that some dachshunds require two lots of surgery, should the first one not be successful.

How long will my dachshund be at the vet?

All surgical cases are different and it depends on the functionality / responsiveness of your dog after surgery, which determines how long your dachshund will remain at the vets after surgery. Each dog is an individual and they vary in response to their recovery, so no one rule fits all. You will be guided by your specialist on how long your dachshund will stay.

Visiting your dachshund after surgery and what to expect.

It's always a very anxious period seeing our beloved dachshund soon after surgery. The vets will allow you to visit your dog as soon as they feel it is appropriate for your dog. When you go to see your dachshund, you will note that they may well be quite drowsy. This is due to all the sedation after surgery, as well as the medication they have been given to help with the pain of surgery. When you first see your dachshund, the most visible thing you will see is a shaved back, and a huge sutured incision down their backs. At first glance it can be frightening to see. But the healing deep down within has started to begin. Don't worry, that wound will heal and their hair will grow back. It just takes time.

Some dachshunds also have visible tubes when you go and visit. One could be an intravenous drip, which is normally located in one of their front paws. This helps to keep them hydrated after surgery while they are recovering. Most dogs don't have an appetite for drinking and eating after surgery, so the drip stays in until your dachshund wants to enjoy drinking and eating again. With most dachshunds we know it usually doesn't take long, as they love their tucker.

Some dachshunds also require a catheter to help them pass urine, especially if they are taking some time to regain deep pain sensation. Catheters normally stay in until a dog regains movement. Once your dog's movement returns, bladder and bowel function soon follows. But don't panic if your dachshund takes longer for them to regain bladder function, as the vets will teach you how to express their bladders if function is slow to return.

Put quite simply, all the above is very normal for the few first days after surgery so no need to panic, it's all part of the recovery process. But do bear in mind, all specialist centres are different in their approach to surgical cases.

Preparing for coming home. What you will need

A metal crate with a roof –

It's essential that after surgery that your dachshund is confined to a crate, as it is exactly what they need to allow nature to do its work and allow your dachshund to heal. It is paramount for this to be done to ensure a maximum recovery. They are still fragile, and a lot of the swelling and inflammation needs to settle down, which requires patience and time. So make sure you make that doggie boudoir nice and comfortable and cozy, as this is going to be home for your dachshund to heal in the coming weeks.

Why metal?

Past experience has shown dachshunds are great escape artists. Soft crates, and even baby pens, are non-contest for a desperate sausage! Of course, these items can play part once your dachshund progresses in his / her healing after surgery, but it's best to start off with a 'trusty old' metal crate and roof. ☺

Disclaimer

This information is presented for educational purposes and as a resource for the Australian Dachshund Community. Dachshund IVDD Support Australia Inc (DISA) and its representatives are not veterinarians or health care professional and nothing herein should be interpreted as medical advice. All owners should contact their pet care professionals for advice.

DISA and its representatives are not responsible for the substance and content contained herein and do not advocate any particular product, item, recommendation or position contained herein.

Updated 17/10/16

What do I need to set up a crate?

A comfy crate pad, nothing too softy or spongy. Remember, your dog has had back surgery and will need lots of support to heal. Lay an absorbent easily washable material underneath your dog; bath mats and towels are handy for this. You may even need lots of towels, as they do appear to go through them quickly. Include their favorite blanket and toys, anything to keep them occupied. A water bowl attached to the side of the crate, enabling easy access and less spillage. Coop cups are great for this purpose. You may also find, if your dog is wearing a 'cone of shame' when coming home, the coop cups are also the perfect size for them to reach the water and can also be used as a feeder bowl. Lots of pee pads are also helpful, as the dogs do tend to have some accidents, especially if they are starting to regain bladder and bowel function. It's best to set a pee pad up at one end of the crate, so they can get to it easily when needed.

Drugs 101

Your veterinary surgeon will have prescribed your dachshund medication to help him / her get by in the following weeks after surgery. Unfortunately, they won't have prescribed you wine, but we highly recommend it to help calm a pawrent during the early stages of IVDD recovery.

Steroids

Anti-inflammatories

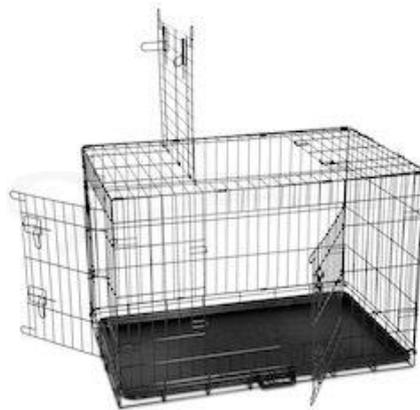
Pain relief

Sedatives

Rehab after surgery

During the first few weeks after surgery you will be advised that your dachshund will most importantly need crate rest, especially in the first few weeks, to allow the surgical area to heal. There will be a lot of inflammation deep down, and this takes time to heal. But it is most important once you are back home, that you contact a rehabilitation centre, so that you can ensure your dog's rehab is supervised by a canine physiotherapist. They will guide you with what exercises and massage you need to do, to ensure your dachshund has the least muscle wastage while healing. They are the best to guide you in what to do, and we have been advised that contact with a rehabilitation specialist should occur within 2 days of having had surgery. We cannot emphasise the importance of rehabilitation enough to ensure that your dachshund has the best chance of getting back up on all four paws again.

Whilst this is a brief guide to surgery and what will be expected you must be guided by your specialist, and the rehabilitation professional, as each dachshund progresses differently after surgery. We wish your dachshund all the best in their recovery. We hope you can join our awesome supportive DISA Facebook group, to help you get through those hard times when you need an extra boost of support, or just a virtual hug. We are here to help. We've got your Back at DISA. ☺



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