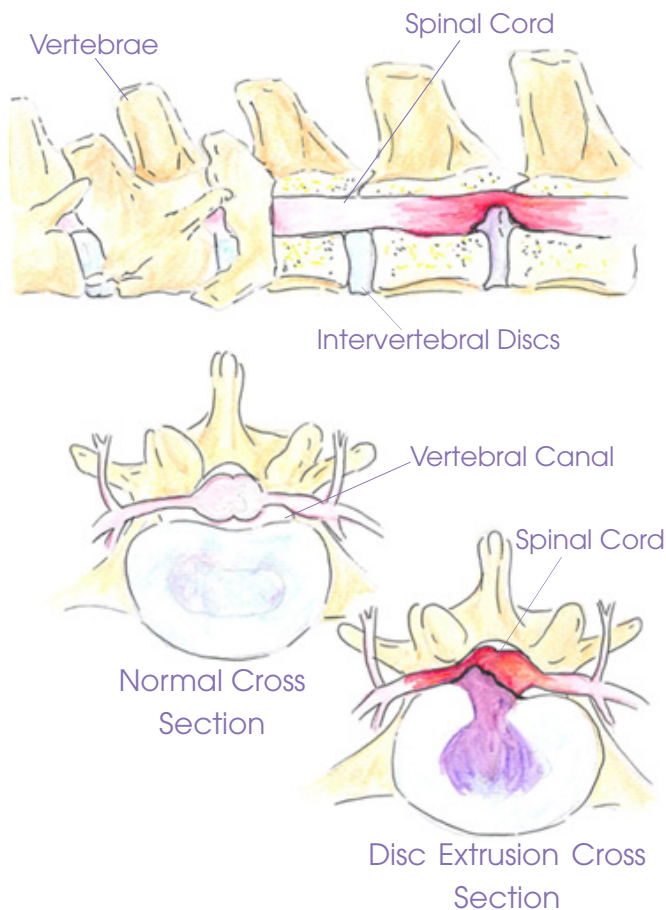


Intervertebral Disc Disease (IVDD) Disc Extrusion

What is a disc extrusion or 'slipped disc'?

The intervertebral discs are composed of an outer capsule and an inner gel-like material that act as a shock-absorber between the bones of the spine (vertebrae) when we move.



In chondrodystrophic breeds, such as dachshunds, there is a degeneration of the material within the discs that becomes thicker and more toothpaste-like. This changes the forces distributed across the disc during movement and a sudden force, such as jumping off furniture, can cause the capsule to burst open, releasing or 'herniating' the material into the vertebral canal. This can cause spinal cord compression and bruising.

Why has my dog been recommended surgery?

The clinical signs of a disc extrusion can vary from pain to paralysis. More severely affected dogs that are unable to walk or use their back legs benefit from surgical decompression of the spinal cord. The main aim of surgery is to remove the compression on the spinal cord and prevent further discs from herniating using a procedure called fenestration. The chance of recovery depends how badly affected dogs are and we feel that dogs that cannot walk benefit from surgery.

Around 10% of dogs that present with no feeling in both back legs can unfortunately deteriorate further going on to develop myelomalacia. This is an irreversible softening of the spinal cord that ascends the spinal cord and can start to affect the front legs and the muscles used for breathing. If we are concerned that there are signs of this developing, we would discuss this further with you.



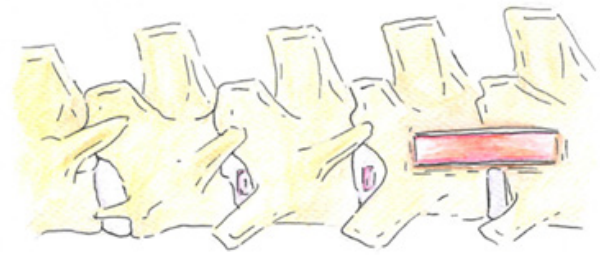
Intervertebral Disc Disease (IVDD) Disc Extrusion

What Surgery will be performed?

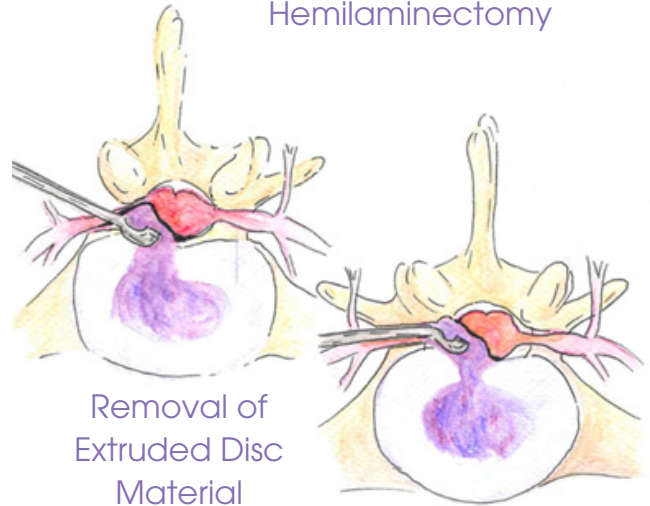
The surgical procedure performed is a hemilaminectomy, whereby a bony window is created, using a spinal drill, within the vertebrae overlying the spinal cord at the disc site to remove the disc material within the vertebral canal.

A procedure called fenestration is also commonly performed to reduce the rate of the disc that has herniated and several other discs in the surgical site herniating in the future. This is where a hole or small window is created in the side of the disc and some disc material is removed using a needle or sometimes a drill burr.

There are risks associated with any surgery such as bleeding, wound infection or breakdown and the general anaesthetic risk itself.



Hemilaminectomy



Removal of Extruded Disc Material

What are the Percentages for Recovery?

Description	Recovery Percentage		Average Time Taken to Recover	
	Surgery	No Surgery (95% CI)	Surgery	No Surgery
Walking but uncoordinated or painful	More than 90%	More than 90%	< 2 Weeks	3-6 Weeks
Unable to walk but able to move	More than 90%	Around 80%	1-2 Weeks	6-9 Weeks
Paraplegic	More than 90%	Around 60%	1-3 Weeks	9-12 Weeks
Pain Negative	Around 60%	Around 10%	3-12 Weeks	9-12 Weeks

Intervertebral Disc Disease (IVDD) Disc Extrusion

What are the main risks associated with spinal surgery?

- Trauma to the spinal cord itself or the nerves that arise from the spinal cord
- Risk of entering the chest cavity when approaching the spine overlying the chest region which can create too much air around the lungs called a pneumothorax
- Increased risk of bleeding due to the nature of the vessels within the spinal canal as a mesh or 'network' of vessels rather than tubes

What happens after surgery?

Following surgery, your dog will be settled into our dedicated neurology ward and monitored to assess their level of comfort, ability to urinate for themselves and for any deterioration post-surgery.

Based on the recommendations made by your clinician, your dog will be assessed by our specialist team of chartered physiotherapists and they will design and implement a physiotherapy and rehabilitation programme specific to your pet.

How long will my dog need to stay in hospital?

This can vary and mainly depends on the level of nursing care required for your pet, such as bladder management and whether you feel confident at continuing this management at home.

Generally, dogs tend to stay in the hospital until they can urinate independently.

Upon discharge, you will have the opportunity to have an appointment with one of our veterinary physiotherapists whereby you will be shown how to perform the necessary physiotherapy techniques and exercises to ensure your dog continues to make progress at home.

What is involved in the aftercare?

The aftercare generally involves 4 weeks of strict rest and physiotherapy, where recommended. This may also include daily bladder expressions if required in dogs that are unable to urinate consciously by themselves. Bladder expression is not technically difficult, and our team of nurses will be able to teach you how to do this.

Dogs with spinal cord injuries can also be prone to developing urine infections and therefore we would ask for you to monitor the colour and smell of your dog's urine.

What is the prognosis long-term?

The prognosis for dogs that are able to feel their back legs is good to excellent. Some dogs may be left with retained deficits in 10-15% of cases; however these are usually mild and do not affect their quality of life.

The prognosis for dogs that are unable to feel their back legs is 50-60% success rate for return to recovery. The majority of dogs that recover the feeling in their legs do so in the 3-4 weeks post-surgery, some dogs may take longer to recover, however some dogs unfortunately do not regain feeling and remain permanently paralysed. Some dogs that remain permanently paralysed are suitable for mobility carts and can still have a good quality of life.

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