



WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK!

What are the chances that my paralyzed dog will recover from an injury due to a disc herniation?

There are many factors that affect the outcome of your dog's injury. The two most important factors are the severity and duration of the injury. If the injury is severe enough to warrant surgery, the veterinary surgeon may be able to give you an indication about the severity of the injury. In most cases, a "dye" will be injected adjacent to the spinal cord. This procedure, called a myelogram, will allow the surgeon to "view" the site of the injury and sometimes the extent of the injury. When decompressive surgery (laminectomy or hemilaminectomy) is performed, a small section of vertebral bone is removed. In some instances, a surgeon will also "peel" back the covering or dura of the spinal cord. These combined procedures provide a small "window" in which to view the spinal cord. In some cases, a surgeon can make an approximation of the damage sustained to the spinal cord.

Another indicator of the severity of the injury is the ability for the dog to appreciate pain. In the worst cases, dogs with Intervertebral Disc Herniations have no deep pain perception. That means that when the veterinarian pinches the toe joint with forceps (a instrument that looks like small needle-nosed pliers), the dog has no detectable facial reaction (no whining, biting, etc.). In these cases, the innermost part of the spinal cord has been damaged. Normally, the chance of recovery from this type of injury is greatly reduced.

The second important factor in regards to recovery is the duration of the injury. The most favorable outcomes for recovery of function occur when surgery is performed within 48 hours of the injury. As the time between the injury and surgery decreases, the favorability of the outcome increases. Generally, the chance of recovery is higher if the dog undergoes surgery within the first 12 hours after onset of paralysis and decreases as time goes by.

These factors, combined with the pet's neurologic status are generally used by your veterinary surgeon to determine your dog's prognosis following an injury.

www.ivdd.org.au

Disclaimer

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