



Down-Dog Daily Care Checklist

PETSLIKEMINE
INTERVERTEBRAL DISC DISEASE

Keeping a dog that cannot walk comfortable, clean and safe

PET NAME	DATE	TURN EVERY (PER VET)	VET
_____	_____	_____	_____

A dog that cannot walk for a while needs good nursing to come through recovery comfortable and free of complications. Three things matter most: turning, the skin, and toileting. None is hard, and all reward a steady routine. Do this alongside the rest and the plan your vet has set, never instead of it.

TURNING IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT HABIT

If your dog cannot reposition itself, you must do it for it. Every two to four hours through the day, turn it gently: left side, then propped upright on its chest, then right side. Lying too long in one position cuts off the blood flow to the skin over the bony points, and that is how pressure sores start. Short spells supported in a sling, if your vet is happy, relieve the pressure too.

CHECK THE SKIN EVERY DAY

Once a day, part the coat and look and gently feel over the bony points where sores begin. Catching the first redness is everything, since a sore is far easier to prevent than to heal.

- The hips and the points of the hips (the greater trochanter)
- The hocks, the heels of the back legs
- Any point that takes your dog's weight as it lies down
- The shoulders and the elbows
- The lowest ribs and the sitting bones

WHAT A STARTING SORE LOOKS LIKE

Redness or warmth over a bony point, thinning or lost hair, or a hard, callus-like thickening of the skin. Left unchecked it can break into an open wound. If you see any of these, take the pressure off that spot straight away and tell your vet.

BLADDER AND BOWEL

Many down dogs cannot empty the bladder on their own, and a bladder left full loses its tone and breeds infection. If your vet has shown you how, express around three to four times a day exactly as they directed (see our Bladder Expression Quick-Reference). Keep an eye on whether your dog is passing motions too, and tell your vet if it is not.

Written and reviewed by Dr Alastair Greenway MRCVS and Claire Greenway BVM&S MRCVS. This sheet explains and records. It does not diagnose or prescribe. Always follow your own vet's instructions.

How to use. Good nursing is what carries a down dog safely through to recovery. Turn it, watch the skin, keep it clean, and ring your vet at the first sign of trouble.

BRING THIS WITH YOU TO YOUR NEXT VET APPOINTMENT

