



Home Safety & Recurrence-Prevention Checklist

PETSLIKEMINE
INTERVERTEBRAL DISC DISEASE

Small changes at home that protect a dog prone to IVDD

PET NAME	BREED	DATE	VET
_____	_____	_____	_____

This is about adaptation, not renovation. A handful of cheap, practical changes make a home far kinder to a dog's spine, whether you are recovering from an episode or protecting an at-risk breed. Walk through room by room and tick off what you have sorted.

FLOORS: THE SINGLE BIGGEST FIX

Slippery floors make the legs splay and scrabble for grip, which twists and jars the spine. This is the cheapest, highest-value change you can make.

- Lay non-slip runners, yoga mats or rugs along the routes your dog uses most, and around the bed and bowls
- Put non-slip backing or pads under any rug that can slide
- Keep the nails short; long nails stop the toes gripping
- Trim the tufts of hair between the paw pads on a long-coated dog, so the pads can grip

RAMPS, STEPS AND THE SOFA

Jumping up and down, on and off furniture or in and out of the car, is a classic way to injure a vulnerable disc.

- Use a ramp or pet steps for the car, and for the sofa or bed if your dog is allowed up: long enough to be gentle, with a grippy surface
- Block the stairs with a baby gate, and carry your dog up and down instead
- Discourage leaping on and off furniture: lift your dog, or give it a low, safe route up

BED, BOWLS AND CLEAR PATHS

- A supportive orthopaedic bed with low sides, easy to climb into, on a non-slip surface
- Raised food and water bowls at about shoulder height save a constant downward stretch on the neck and back
- Keep your dog's main paths clear and well lit, so it is not clambering over clutter

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. None of this is dramatic or expensive. It is a runner here, a ramp there, and short nails, and together it takes a lot of strain off a vulnerable back.

BRING THIS WITH YOU TO YOUR NEXT VET APPOINTMENT



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Lowering the chance of another episode, honestly

WHAT GENUINELY LOWERS THE RISK

- Keep your dog lean: carrying less weight is the single clearest thing in your hands to protect the spine
- Keep it appropriately active and well-muscled, since a strong core supports the back; sedentary is not safer
- Walk on a harness, not a collar, to keep pressure off the neck
- Use ramps to spare the repetitive jumping down from heights that loads the discs
- Avoid encouraging repetitive, high-impact leaping, but do not wrap a well dog in cotton wool

AN HONEST WORD ON STAIRS

You may have read that stairs cause IVDD. The picture is more nuanced. For a dog that is well, gentle everyday stairs are generally fine, and there is a real risk in over-restricting a healthy dog on a misread of the evidence: a dog kept too sedentary loses the very muscle that supports its spine. The strict no-stairs, no-jumping rule belongs to the recovery period during and after an episode, set by your vet. For life, the goal is sensible moderation, a lean weight and good muscle, not a life lived on one level.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

Even with every precaution, a disc can still go. Act fast on a sudden inability to walk, dragging or knuckling the back paws, crying out in pain, a sudden inability to wee, or a rigid, hunched, painful back or neck. The triage checker at petslikemine.co.uk/tools/ivdd-check helps you judge the urgency.

TAKE IT FURTHER

For an at-risk breed, our guides to the genetics of IVDD and to adapting your home go further still. Find them at petslikemine.co.uk.

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How to use. Prevention is moderation, not bubble-wrap: a lean, strong, sensibly managed dog, in a home that has had the slip and the big jumps designed out of it.

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