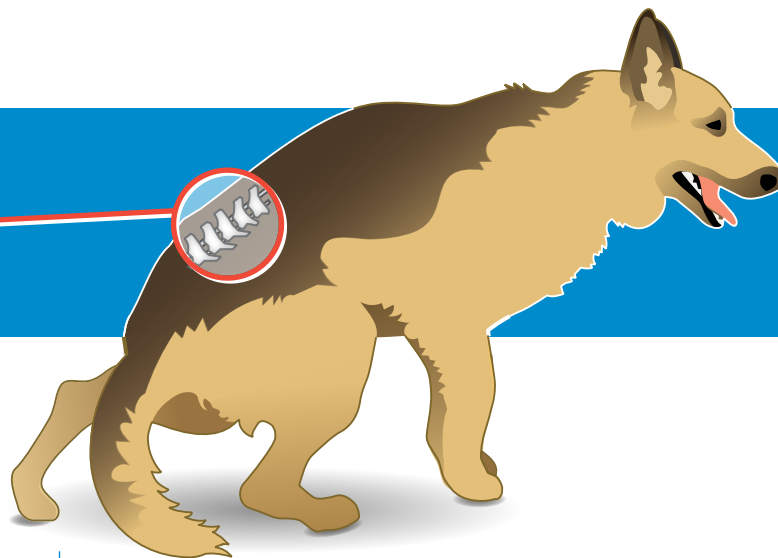


# WHAT IS DEGENERATIVE MYELOPATHY (DM)



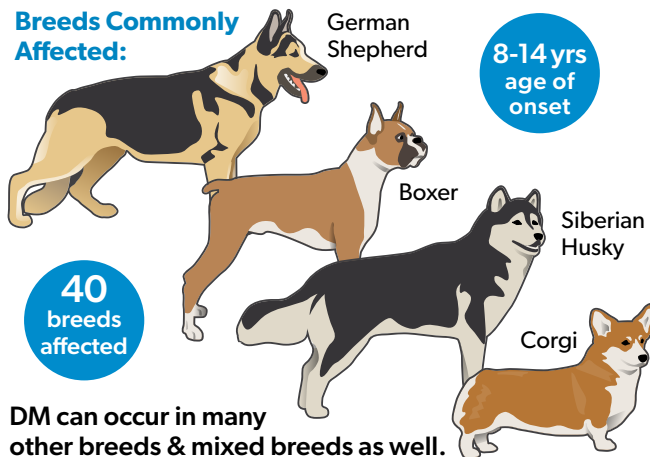
DM is a progressive spinal cord disease in older dogs, resulting in a lack of coordination and eventual mobility loss. Although there is no cure, intervention can extend survival time and greatly improve quality of life. Similar to ALS in humans, dogs with DM experience slowly progressive hind limb weakness and eventual paralysis as the condition worsens.

As the condition progresses and the spinal cord deteriorates, symptoms will worsen and move up the spine. Dogs will scrape their nails more often as they walk and stumble more frequently as their back legs weaken.

In later stages, DM dogs are unable to bear weight on their hind legs and will become completely paralyzed in the rear. All DM dogs will need a wheelchair at some point to stay mobile.

## What Breeds get DM?

### Breeds Commonly Affected:

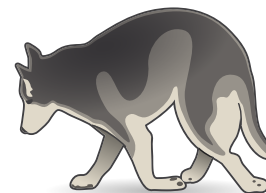


DM can occur in many other breeds & mixed breeds as well.

## Symptoms and Progression

### Initial

- Loss of coordination in the hind limbs
- Mild hind end weakness
- Rear feet knuckling or dragging



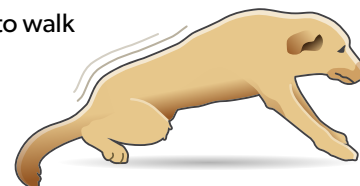
### 6 Months

- Hind limbs become weaker
- Dog has difficulty standing
- Dog may lose ability to walk



### 1 Year

- Urinary and fecal incontinence
- Weakness in front limbs as well as hind
- Eventual paralysis in hind limbs



## Early Signs of DM

In the very earliest stages of DM, the symptoms of the disease come on slowly and can be hard to spot. For DM, look for the following signs:

- Knuckling in the hind paws
- Dog's hind end appears to sway when standing still
- Dog loses their balance when gently pushed from the side
- Back feet scrape when walking; may notice nails wearing unevenly from dragging
- Dog struggles to stand up from lying position



# DEGENERATIVE MYELOPATHY INTERVENTION

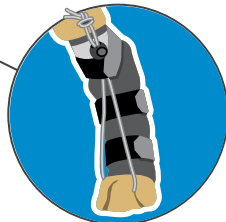


## What Can I Do if my Dog has DM?

DM is not a painful disease, but it does weaken pets and this weakness can put added stress on a dog's body. If your dog is showing signs of pain, they may have another condition. Speak with your Veterinarian regarding diagnosis, and developing a treatment plan. There is no cure for DM, but there are ways to help manage your dog's symptoms and improve their quality of life.

### Assistive Equipment

- Slings and harnesses for a lifting support
- Pet booties to protect dragging paws
- Utilize training tools to help with paw placement and gait training



### In-Home Support

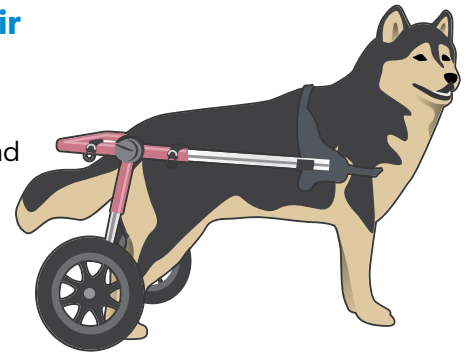
- Active exercise, like walking
- Passive exercise, like stretching
- Massage to improve muscle function



*Be careful not to overdo exercise, or condition can worsen*

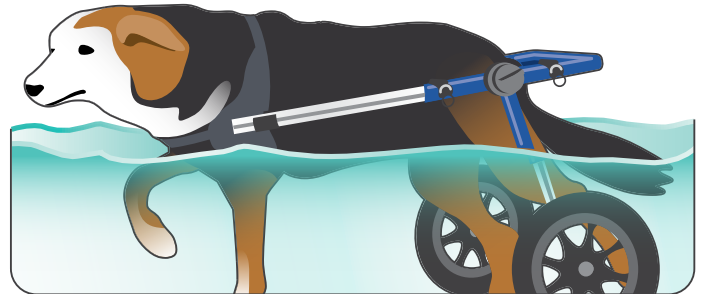
### Dog Wheelchair

- Keep pets active and mobile
- Increase strength and minimize chance of muscle atrophy



### Holistic Care

- Physical therapy and hydrotherapy for muscle strength



- Balanced nutrition
- Acupuncture to help with blood flow



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