

## For Dog Health Specialists, Find a Vet School

### **Dachshund with spinal injury needs orthopedic specialist for back surgery.**

*Jon Geller, DVM*

Q. We have a wonderful little Dachshund who suddenly started having trouble walking. Our vet said she has three slipped discs in her back. Even with injections and medication, she is in great pain. Can you suggest a good orthopedic surgeon in Kentucky or Tennessee? We love her so much and want the best for her.

A. It can be challenging to find a veterinary specialist in certain parts of the country, not to mention the rest of the world. For a complicated surgery such as a back surgery, it is especially important to find someone with appropriate training and experience. Most general practitioners do not have the time to commit to the extra training, and recent advancements in surgery that are required to stay proficient.

Veterinary medicine is following human medicine in becoming increasingly specialized. In addition to specialties in surgery, there are specialists for internal medicine, neurology, dermatology, behavior, nutrition, radiology, and a host of others.

The best place to start looking for a specialist is at the nearest veterinary college. Most veterinary colleges have multiple specialists on their staff who provide specialty services in addition to their teaching and research duties. In addition, the veterinary college would also have the names of other surgeons in the area.

There are 23 veterinary colleges in the United States. The nearest veterinary college in your area is the University of Tennessee. The college has the facilities and staff to perform the needed back surgery on your Dachshund. Ask your regular veterinary to set up a consultation and exam there, and to forward any necessary medical records.