

Give Gentle Care to Dachshund With Bad Back

Not climbing stairs is signal that dog's disk is bulging.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. I am the proud owner of a wirehaired Dachshund. She is a wonderful dog and followed me around all the time until recently.

She has started to refuse to come up the front or back stairs of our house, and she will not climb the stairs to come to bed. This started last week out of the blue. She doesn't seem to be in pain, and she is eating well. What do you think my course of action should be?

A. As you probably know, Dachshunds are famous for their back problems. Your dog is probably trying to tell you that something is going on with her back, and she has the common sense not to exacerbate the injury. Follow her lead, and don't risk serious back injury in the form of a ruptured disc. In Dachshunds, it is not unusual for a cartilage disk between the vertebrae to bulge out, and then finally completely rupture.

She needs time for her back to heal and form some new scar tissue around any bulging discs. Carry her up the stairs and onto your bed for the next three to four weeks, and then see if she seems to be doing better.

You may also want to ask your veterinarian about prescribing some anti-inflammatory medications such as Rimadyl, Deramaxx or Metacam. These can also assist with reducing swelling and inflammation around intervertebral discs.

If your Dachshund does overdo it and ruptures a disc, she will need back surgery to fix it. This can be invasive, expensive and inconvenient, so try to avoid future surgery by helping your dog get around for a while.