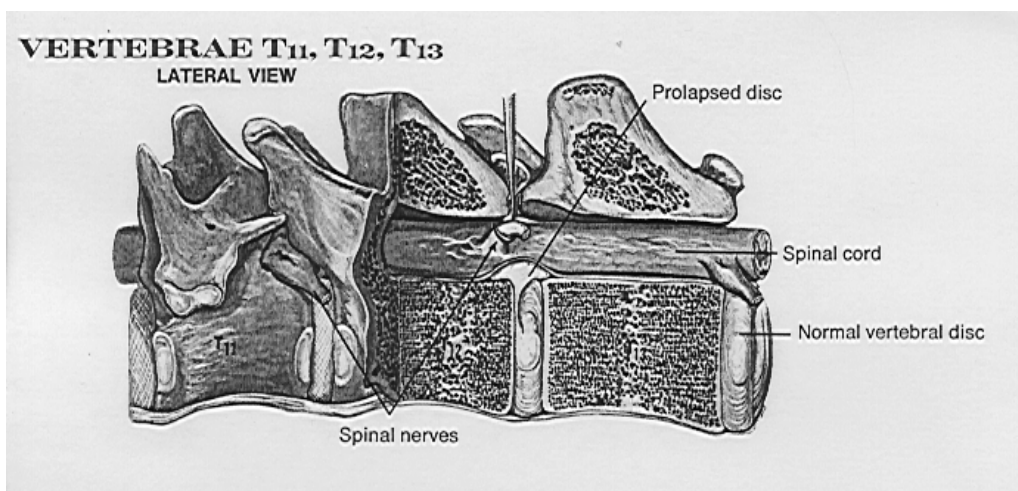


INTERVERTEBRAL DISC DISEASE ("Slipped disc")



The spine is made up of bony segments called vertebrae. The discs are located between the vertebrae, and serve as shock absorbers for the spinal column. The normal disc is a firm, jelly-like structure.

When a disc becomes diseased, either through a gradual degeneration or injury, the weakened structure starts to slip out of place. It may also rupture completely. The pressure of this out of place disc material on the spinal cord and nerves causes pain, incoordination, weakness, or paralysis.

Disc disease in the neck area produces a "pinched nerve", with great pain and front leg lameness. Trouble in the lower back region may cause complete paralysis, or loss of bowel and bladder control. Medical treatment for this problem relieves pain and inflammation. In severe cases, surgery is necessary to remove the out of place disc material, and hence the pressure on the spinal cord.

Physical examination, X-rays and nerve tests will help your veterinarian determine the best cause of treatment for your pet. If medical management is recommended, it may include any or all of the following:

1. Absolute rest or confinement at home, with or without medication
2. Confinement in the hospital and stronger medication, usually injectable

Once this problem has occurred it is likely to happen again. Keeping your dog from becoming overweight and discouraging jumping will help prevent recurrence.