







## Home care for DM

You will need to make sure that your dog stays happy and comfortable at home.

### **Bedding**

Choosing the right bed is important; your dog may struggle to get in and out of an enclosed bed, providing a large, flat padded bed will help them stay comfortable. Memory foam beds are kind on joints.

### **Managing incontinence**

A large part of managing a dog with DM is dealing with their incontinence. You will need to regularly clean and dry your dog to stop urine scald. It is a good idea to cover their bed with something that will soak up urine and keep them dry.

### **Foot protection**

If your dog drags their back feet and scuffs their claws/toes it may be necessary to provide them with some protection i.e. a pair of protective dog boots. Speak to your vet about the most suitable product for your dog. Be careful not to put anything too tight onto your dog's feet.

## Outlook

Once diagnosed, your dog's symptoms will slowly progress until their paralysis becomes too severe to cope with. If at any point, you, or your vet think your dog may be suffering, it may be necessary to consider making the difficult decision to put them to sleep.

Most dogs with DM pass away, or need putting to sleep within 1-2 years of diagnosis.

## Breeds at risk of DM

- German Shepherd Dog
- Boxer
- Corgi
- Labrador
- Bernese Mountain Dogs

## Prevention

Genetic testing is available to highlight dogs at risk of DM. We should not breed from at risk dogs or dogs whose parents have had DM.

## Cost

Treatment for degenerative myelopathy can become expensive. Consider insuring your dog as soon as you get them, before any signs of illness start. This will ensure you have all the support you need to care for them.

It's also very important to speak openly to your vet about your finances, the cost of treatment, as well as what you think is right for your dog. There are often several treatment options so if one doesn't work for you and your pet then the vet may be able to offer another.

Published: Aug 2019