

STAGES OF DM PROGRESSION WHAT TO EXPECT/DO FOR YOUR DOG

EARLY STAGES

- Loss of balance/tremors in one or both hind legs
- Dog needs assistance to change positions while sitting or lying down
- Damage to nails such as uneven wear – especially of the middle 2 nails, which are the most weight bearing
- Loss of hair on tops of feet as they start to drag

INTERMEDIATE STAGES (3 to 6 months in duration)

- More knuckling over in the rear feet
- Limp tail and loss of ability to use tail (i.e. wagging, lifting to defecate, etc.)
- Crossing over or “scissoring” of hind legs
- Dog will not trot normally – they start using both hind legs as one leg and it is easier for them to “lope” or “gallop” with hind legs moving together than trot, as they lose coordination behind
- Advanced nail wear on rear feet as toes drag more and more
- Hind limb (s) start to drag or become useless
- Some urinary and fecal incontinence will be evident
- Mental stress/anxiety
- Infections of bladder/urinary tract (due to incomplete emptying when urinating due to loss of sensation/feel)
- Pneumonia
- Constipation
- Clumping of hair/matting/soiled appearance due to inability to move around and have normal hair movement

END STAGE

- More rapid progression of disease – weakness in all 4 limbs may be evident as the disease progresses from the rear limbs up the spinal cord and starts affecting the nerves and muscles in the back and front limbs
- Muscle wasting will become very evident – in rear limbs, progressing up the sides of the body and eventually forelimbs also will evidence loss of muscling and use
- Advanced urinary and fecal incontinence – virtually no control at this point so intense attention must be given to keeping the dog emptied, and dry
- Pressure sores from laying in one position may occur
- Uncontrolled jerking in hind limbs including kicking out without any reason. Exercise **EXTREME** care when trimming feet, hocks, or clipping or dremmeling nails as accidents may cause injury to you and/or the dog as a result of these uncontrollable jerks
- Difficulty breathing as muscles in lung area atrophy

- Vomiting/diarrhea
- Seizures
- Profuse bleeding (internal or external)
- Crying/whining (from pain from falls, or other illness/injury that may not be obvious)

Eventual and total gradual paralysis will occur. This will eventually cause the dog to be unable to hold his head up to eat or drink, and he will be long past the use of rear and front legs if it gets to this point.

PLEASE REMEMBER – a dog that dies of DM will die of suffocation or starvation as he will not be able to swallow or breathe. **PLEASE** – do not let it get to this point.