

# Neurological Disorders in Dogs and Cats

Dogs and cats get neurological conditions. The nervous system is made up of the **brain, spinal cord, nerves and muscles**. Certain neurological conditions can affect any part of the nervous system, while others only happen in certain parts of the nervous system.

**The general types of disorders that can affect the nervous system include:**

- Degenerative causes
- Malformation and congenital abnormalities (“birth defects”)
- Metabolic problems (problems with the internal organs)
- Cancerous causes
- Nutritional problems
- Inflammation
- Infections
- Trauma
- Problems with the blood supply to the nervous system

## **Neurological Disorders in Dogs and Cats that Affect the Brain**

The brain has many important roles, including controlling movement, vision, hearing, taste, memory, problem solving, emotion, controlling hormone balance and balance. Each of these functions is controlled by a different part of the brain. The pets will depend on where the problem is within the brain.

### **Symptoms of a brain problem in dogs and cats may include:**

- Seizures
- Balance problems
- Walking in circles
- Blindness
- Confusion

### **Examples of brain diseases in dogs and cats include:**

- Epilepsy
- Brain tumors (meningioma, glioma, ependymoma, others)
- Meningitis
- Encephalitis
- Strokes
- Infections of the brain (bacterial, fungal, viral, etc)
- Degeneration
- Malformation such as hydrocephalus

## **Neurological Disorders in Dogs and Cats that Affect the Spinal Cord**

The spinal cord carries information from the brain to the rest of the body (limbs, tail, internal organs) and carries information to the brain (hot and cold, pain, knowing where the limbs are,). One of the most important functions of the spinal cord is transmitting information for walking.

### **If the problems in the spinal cord of the neck, symptoms may include:**

- Pain in the neck
- Wobbliness
- Dragging of all four limbs
- Inability to walk on all four limbs

### **If the problems in the spinal cord of the back, symptoms may include:**

- Back pain
- Wobbliness
- Dragging of the rear limbs
- Inability to use the rear limbs

### **Examples of spinal cord diseases in dogs and cats include:**

- Intervertebral disc disease
- Spinal cord tumors (meningioma, glioma, neuroblastoma, lymphoma)
- Infection of the disc (discospondylitis)

- Infection of the spinal cord
- Meningitis
- Inflammation of the spinal cord (myelitis)
- Malformations
- Stenosis (narrowing of the spinal canal)

### **Neurological Conditions in Dogs and Cats that Affect the Nerves and Muscles**

The nerves carry information from the spinal cord to the muscles. **When there is a problem affecting the nerves and/or muscles, symptoms may include:**

- Weakness in the limbs
- Seeming 'lame'
- Inability to walk
- Seeming limp
- Changes in the voice
- Sometimes spitting up (regurgitation)

**Examples of neurological conditions affecting the nerves or muscles include:**

- Tick paralysis
- Botulism
- Myasthenia gravis
- Inflammation of the muscles
- Coral snake envenomation

- ‘Coonhound paralysis’

### **Treatment Neurological Disorders in Dogs and Cats**

Many of these conditions are completely curable. Many of them can be treated with an excellent outcome, some can only be helped for a time, and some are not fixable at all. If the pet is showing any of the symptoms listed above the caring depend on veterinary neurologists.