

Striking the Right Nerve...

NEUROLOGY AND YOUR PET

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Texas pet owners love their animals! We all want the best nutrition, the best toys, and the best health care for our four-legged family members. Many people are unaware that dogs and cats can experience serious neurological problems, such as seizures, back injuries, dizziness, and even paralysis.

That was the situation one Houston-area pet owner found herself in when her miniature Dachshund, Schnitzel, jumped off of the couch one morning, and a few minutes later was unable to walk and dragging both of his rear legs. Shocked, Schnitzel's mom immediately called her family veterinarian, who agreed to see Schnitzel that morning. After examining him, the doctor recommended a referral to a neurologist for further evaluation. Dr. Randall Longshore, a neurologist at Gulf Coast Veterinary Neurology & Neurosurgery (GCVNN) diagnosed what is unfortunately a common problem in Dachshunds – a ruptured disc in Schnitzel's back had caused his back legs to become paralyzed. It was imperative that Dr. Longshore isolate the exact location of the affected disc, and luckily at GCVNN Schnitzel was able to have an MRI that same day with one of the most powerful veterinary MRI's (a 1.5 Tesla machine) in the region. The MRI identified the ruptured disc quickly, and Dr. Longshore was able to perform the delicate spinal surgery within hours of Schnitzel's initial diagnosis with pinpoint

accuracy.

After surgery, Schnitzel benefited from the dedicated team of veterinarians and technicians at GCVNN who are completely focused on the care for neurologically injured animals and their owners, and have developed a unique understanding of their



special needs through education and experience. He was able to begin rehabilitation through Gulf Coast Animal Rehabilitation and Fitness shortly after surgery, and with his devoted mom by his side, Schnitzel made a full recovery and is back to walking, running and chasing squirrels out of his backyard!

Not all neurological problems are as obvious or as sudden as Schnitzel's. If your pet is experiencing seizures, has back injuries, muscle disease, trouble walking and getting up, or disorientation and balance problems, they should be seen by a neurologist. Veterinary neurologists receive special training with an internship and residency after they have completed veterinary school. They are trained to

perform neurological examinations, perform and evaluate diagnostic testing (X-rays of the spine and skull, CT and MRI of the spine and brain, cerebrospinal fluid collection and analysis, electrical testing of nerves and muscle, and biopsy of nerve and muscle), formulate potential diagnoses, manage medical neurological disease, and even perform surgery of the brain and spine. They are also trained on post-operative care and long-term management of animals with a variety of neurological injuries and diseases.

As a long-standing Houston institution, Gulf Coast Veterinary Specialists has provided such specialty care not only in neurology, but also in the areas of surgery, exotics, rehabilitation and fitness, internal medicine, critical care, diagnostic imaging, dermatology, and oncology for over 25 years. The team at Gulf Coast Veterinary Neurology and Neurosurgery is happy to be able to provide a unique facility to better serve the Houston pet community. "Having a facility that is completely dedicated to veterinary neurology and neurosurgery allows our staff to provide the extra support and accessibility that is needed to provide the best care of pets with neurological injury," says Dr. Randall Longshore. If you think your pet has a neurological problem that would benefit from the services of a neurologist, talk to your family veterinarian about a referral today!