

# PATELLAR LUXATION FACT SHEET



NAME

WEIGHT

DATE

NEXT VISIT

## DESCRIPTION

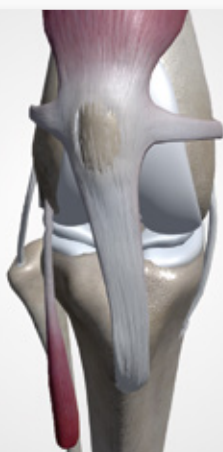
Patellar luxation occurs when the kneecap (patella) slips out of its normal groove at the lower end of the thigh bone.

The kneecap may slip to either or both sides: inside (medial) or outside (lateral). Medial patellar luxation is more common and tends to occur in small-breed dogs. Lateral patellar luxation is less common and tends to be found in large-breed dogs.



### NORMAL STIFLE

- In a healthy joint, the kneecap and all the structures that hold it in place are found in a straight vertical line.
- As the knee moves, the kneecap moves smoothly up and down in its groove.



### PATELLAR LUXATION

Various grades can be identified:

- **Grade 1:** The kneecap can be luxated with manual pressure but is otherwise within the groove.
- **Grade 2:** The kneecap spontaneously luxates but repositions during movement.
- **Grade 3:** The kneecap is permanently luxated but can manually be replaced in the groove.
- **Grade 4:** The kneecap is permanently luxated and cannot be manually replaced in the groove.

Often, the groove at the lower end of the thigh bone is too shallow to keep the kneecap in place.

# PATELLAR LUXATION

## CLINICAL SIGNS

- During walks, the dog will suddenly hold the affected leg up. After a short period (allowing for spontaneous relocation of the kneecap), the dog will start to use the leg normally again.
- In more severe cases or when the cranial cruciate ligament is also ruptured, the dog may be very lame. They may only toe-touch and/or walk with bent hindlimbs.



## TREATMENT OPTIONS

### Non-surgical management

- **Anti-inflammatory drugs** are used to reduce pain and inflammation in the joint, thereby improving the dog's quality of life.
- **Dietary supplements** may be added for different purposes. Glucosamine with chondroitin sulphate supports the joint cartilage. Omega-3 fatty acids are used for their anti-inflammatory properties.
- **Controlled exercise** is used in mild patellar luxation to strengthen the surrounding muscles and prevent the kneecap slipping.
- **Physiotherapy** uses a customised exercise program to improve the dog's clinical signs.

Conservative treatment may be recommended for adult dogs with grade 1 or 2 patellar luxation with no or mild clinical signs.

### Surgical intervention

- **Recession sulcoplasty:** This involves deepening the groove in which the kneecap sits, to encourage it to stay in the correct position.
- **Tibial tuberosity transposition:** Realignment of the tendon spanning between kneecap and lower leg bone (tibia) to facilitate a stable position of the kneecap within its groove.
- **Femoral varus osteotomy:** Indicated in dogs with a severe bow in the thigh bone to straighten the bone angle, especially with higher grades of patellar luxation. The prognosis is much more guarded in these cases.

Surgical treatment is strongly advised for grade 3 and 4 patellar luxation. As dogs will develop osteoarthritis following surgery, benefits of surgery should be balanced against risk of osteoarthritis.

## TIPS FOR THE OWNER

- Daily physiotherapy, including gentle, short exercises – as directed by your veterinarian – is beneficial for your dog as it will improve the mobility of the affected limb.
- Keeping your dog's weight under control with an appropriate high-quality diet and calorie restriction is essential to maintaining their joint health and general well-being.
- You can help your dog by using a harness that provides them with support and assistance on walks.
- Environmental modifications, such as a comfortable bed to sleep on, a mat on slippery floors and a ramp or steps to get into the car, will make daily activities easier for your dog.
- Don't forget to use medical treatment to reduce pain and inflammation, and to improve your dog's quality of life.

**Please consult with your veterinarian for confirmation of any diagnosis or treatment.**