



BRANDYWINE VALLEY

Veterinary Hospital & Surgical Referral Service

Compassionate Pet Care through Client Communication

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PATELLAR LUXATION

Medial Patella Luxation is the most common Patella problem presented to veterinarians. Luxation refers to the malalignment of the knee cap (Patella) with the knee joint (stifle). With toy and miniature breeds affected 12 times more frequently than large breeds, this abnormality is thought to originate secondary to a strong hereditary basis. 50% of dogs with Patellar Luxation show signs of the disease in both knees. Clinical signs of Patellar luxation may include lameness, intermittent skipping or hopping, or a crouched and/or bow-legged stance of the hind limbs. Recurrent luxation not only results in lameness, but may also increase wear on other structures within the knee. Dogs with Luxating Patella commonly develop arthritis and may have a greater risk of Cranial Cruciate Ligament rupture. Diagnosis of a patellar luxation is usually made upon physical examination by your veterinarian, however, x-rays are often taken to confirm and rule out other causes of hind limb lameness. The degree of luxation (or abnormal movement of the knee) may be graded by your veterinarian on a scale of I, II, III, or IV. Surgical repair of your dog's patella is usually not performed unless a Grade II (or higher) is diagnosed. Surgical candidacy is in large part diagnosed by the degree of lameness in your dog exhibits at home.

It is essential to understand the anatomy of the stifle (knee) joint to appreciate the surgical options available for luxation repair. The Patella bones lies within a thick tendon called the Patellar Tendon. The Patellar Tendon connects a large body of muscles overlying the Femur bone (called the Quadriceps) to a bone in the lower leg called the Tibia. Upon contraction of the Quadriceps muscles, the knee is extended. This action is guided by a trough carved into the Femur bone, called the "Trochlear groove". Dogs which have a shallow trochlear groove are more likely to exhibit luxation. Trochleoplasty refers to the surgical process of deepening the trochlear groove to facilitate proper sliding of the Patella. Following surgery, all dogs are restricted to leash walks for 4 to 6 weeks. Post-operative care may also include "passive range of motion" exercises and K-laser therapy. All dogs are encouraged to maintain a lean body frame after surgery. The supplementation of glucosamine and chondroitin post-operatively is highly recommended to decrease arthritic change in the joint.