



## Patellar Luxation

### Diagnostic Plan

History  
Physical examination  
Stifle palpation  
Stifle X-rays

### Therapeutic Plan

Surgery

### Nutritional Plan

Postsurgically, nutrition  
adequate for tissue repair  
If obesity is a complicating  
factor, restrict caloric intake  
so the patient reaches and  
maintains an ideal body  
weight

## Patellar Luxation

Your pet has a patellar luxation. Patellar luxations are dislocations of the knee-cap due to trauma or congenital causes. These luxations cause rear-leg lameness and abnormal gaits such as skipping. Patellar luxations are treated by surgically stabilizing the knee joint. This client education sheet will help you learn more about patellar luxations and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

### What You Should Know About Patellar Luxation

The patella is a bone found within the tendon for the major group of muscles on the front of your pet's leg. This tendon crosses the knee joint and attaches to the tibia – the bone below the femur (thighbone). The patella fits in a groove on the lower end of the femur.

Patellar luxations occur when the patella slips or is pushed out of the groove on the end of the femur. Most patellar luxations occur in small dogs, and the luxation usually occurs toward the inside of the leg. In small dogs, the patellar groove is relatively flat, which enables the patella to slip in and out of its normal position easily.

#### Causes

Trauma may cause the patella to luxate, but this is uncommon. Most cases of patellar luxations are the result of congenital defects and occur in small dogs. The cause isn't known, but it probably involves a combination of minor to severe deformities of the bones of the rear leg.

In normal dogs and cats, the femur and tibia are aligned in a straight line. But in many small dogs, the femur bows outward and the tibia rotates inward. The tendon of which the patella is a part simply cannot follow the S-shape of the leg in animals with this deformity. The tendon and the muscles to which it attaches are pulled toward the inside of the pet's leg. A shallow patellar groove facilitates luxation. These deformities tend to worsen with time.

## Diagnosis

Patellar luxation is diagnosed when your veterinarian performs a physical exam. X-rays of the affected leg may show arthritic changes that have developed in the knee as a result of patellar luxation. They may also demonstrate the bone changes that contribute to patellar luxation.

## Treatment and Home Care

Animals with a patellar luxation diagnosed during a routine physical exam may require no treatment if they show no signs. Surgery is often recommended for animals that have gait abnormalities, lameness or severe rear-leg deformities. Surgery involves a variety of techniques including: creating restraints that prohibit luxation; making the patellar groove deeper; straightening the leg by removing segments of bone; and repositioning where the tendon containing the patella attaches to the tibia.

Home care consists of restricting exercise according to your veterinarian's instructions. Many surgical patients benefit from foods with increased levels of protein and energy during the recovery process. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® a/d® Canine/Feline Critical Care.

## Nutritional Plan

If your pet is overweight, your veterinarian may recommend a special food to return your pet to its optimal weight, which helps reduce stress on the knee joints and helps maintain normal joint function. The best food for reducing weight is a nutritionally complete and balanced high-fiber, low-fat and low-calorie food such as Hill's® Prescription Diet® r/d® Canine and r/d® Feline Weight Loss-Low Calorie. Recent studies in cats have shown weight reduction benefits of feeding foods with high protein and low carbohydrate levels, such as Hill's Prescription Diet m/d® Feline Weight Loss-Low Carbohydrate-Diabetic.

Once your pet's weight returns to normal, your next goal is to maintain this healthier optimal weight. Your veterinarian may recommend a special food with reduced calories and increased levels of fiber to maintain your pet's weight. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® w/d® Canine and w/d® Feline Low Fat-Diabetic-Gastrointestinal.

## Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

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## Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Medication(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Nutritional Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.