Medial Luxating Patella

Medial patellar luxation (MLP) (aka Slipped knee cap) is the displacement of the patella (knee cap) out of the normal groove medially (toward the centerline of the body). MLP is a common cause of lameness in small-breed dogs which begins early in the growth of the animal. The degree of misalignment varies considerably from the mildest (grade 1) to the most severe (grade 4).

Most affected animals begin with an intermittent lameness where you may notice your pet holds its leg flexed (pulled up) for a few steps (Skipping) in grades 1 and 2 progressing to inability to fully extend the leg(s), bowing and pigeon toed rotation of the leg and walking in a crouched position as seen in grades 3 and 4.

Diagnosis is usually based on physical exam of the stifle (knee joint). Radiographs (x-rays) are used to assess the extent of the patellar mis-alignment and other skeletal changes.

Treatment of MLP includes conservative or no treatment, to surgical correction. Surgery is designed to improve limb function, and to slow or prevent the development of degenerative joint disease by stabilizing the patella within the trochlear groove and re-aligning the muscle/bone forces. Surgery should be considered in older pets that are noticeably lame and in young pets that are intermittently lame.

There are many surgical techniques designed to restrain the patella in its normal location in the trochlear groove. Generally, a combination of multiple techniques is needed for adequate restraint. The techniques chosen depend on the severity and complexity of the stifle (knee) anatomy, the degree of muscle/skeletal deformity, and the preferences of the surgeon. The most common techniques are: Tibial Tubercle Rotation, Wedge Recession Trochleoplasty (deepening of the trochlear groove), quadriceps and medial retinacular release, lateral reinforcement / imbrication, anti-rotational banding.

Post operatively, the pet will have exercise restrictions of leash walks only for at least 6-8 weeks. Stairs should be avoided as well as allowing your pet to jump up on furniture. Rough playing should be avoided. Controlled leash walks are encouraged to help maintain muscle mass and flexibility of the knee joint.

The outcome following surgical repair is good to excellent. 95% of all dogs undergoing Patellar Luxation repair will have significant improvement and return toward normal function following repair. Re-luxation of the patella is a common complication. One study reported as high as 35% reluxation, but clinical and functional use of the leg was present in 90-95% of those patients. The outcome depends on the age of the pet, the body weight score (Obesity) and the amount of degenerative joint disease (arthritis) present at the time of surgery. Degenerative joint disease will progress despite surgical repair. Our goal is to slow the process and provide a functional pain-reduced leg.
Patellar Luxation Repair - Post Surgery Instructions

Your pet has had one or more of the following surgical procedures performed:
- Tibial Tubercle Osteotomy
- Trochlear Wedge Resection
- Medial Quadriceps Release
- Lateral Imbrication

Your pet will need a post operative follow up appointment and suture removal in 10 days. Follow-up X-Rays are needed at 6-8 weeks to evaluate healing of the osteotomy site. This is typically done at your normal veterinarian, however if this is not possible, we can take care of this at the Referral Center.

Home Care:
- It is best to feed and water your pet using small amounts often to help avoid vomiting the first night at home.
- You will need to restrict your pets activity for 8-12 weeks following surgery. --- (See Exercise note below)
- Do NOT bathe your pet for 15 days follow surgery.
- Start all medication the evening of discharge. All medication may be given together and with food.
- You will see an increase in swelling and bruising for several days following surgery. This is normal and should resolve within 2-4 days.
- Neosporin can be applied to the incision twice daily if desired. Distract your pet for several minutes following application so the ointment can be absorbed. Most of the time, the more attention You give to the leg, the more attention your Pet will give to the leg!

Exercise: The importance of limiting exercise during the first 6-8 weeks cannot be over-emphasized. Exercise must be limited to leash walks only for the first 6-8 weeks. Stairs must be limited or the use of a ramp employed. No playing with other dogs, no jumping, or any other source of rough play should be permitted. Abrupt, strenuous activity during the first 2 months post-op will weaken the surgical repair. The long term success of the surgery is dependant on following these restrictions. However, leash walks around the block etc are encouraged, if controlled. After 2 months post-op, gradual increase in off leash exercise is allowed.

Expectations/Complications: Outcome following surgical repair is usually good to excellent, with most dog approaching normal limb function. The most common complication associated with patellar luxation surgical repair is recurrence of the luxation which may require future surgery. Degenerative joint disease (Arthritis) will progress despite surgical correction. The amount depends on the age of the pet, body weight and the amount of arthritis present at the time of surgery.

10 days post-op ... toe touching only
4 weeks post op ... 30% use of leg with pronounced limp
8 weeks post op ... 75-80% use of leg with mild limp
12 weeks pos op ... 85-95% use of leg with minimal to no limp

Please call our office or cell phone if you have any questions or concerns. Your pets recovery and health is our main concern so don't hesitate to call.

Office - 989-729-6000      Cell - 989-666-3796
Patella Luxation Repair Fee Range

$1100 - $1200

This fee includes initial examination, pre and post surgery medicines, intravenous fluids, anesthesia, surgery, vital signs monitoring, hospitalization and suture removal in 10 days.