



## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING MPL SURGERY

**M**edial patella luxation (MPL) is a common condition, especially in small/toy breeds. It is almost always caused by congenital malformation of the bone structures in and around the knee joint, resulting in a shallow groove where the patella (knee cap) usually sits and an abnormally positioned attachment of the patellar tendon on the tibia (shin) bone. Angular limb deformities and traumatic causes are also possible.

Diagnosis is made on physical exam and given a grade of 1 through 4. Some dogs with lower grades can progress to higher grades over time. Also, MPL is thought to predispose some dogs to rupturing their cranial cruciate ligament (approximately 15% of dogs will have both conditions, although the causality is unknown). Many dogs with lower grade MPLs do not require surgery. However, those with high grades (3 and 4) and/or that have frequent or persistent clinical signs will benefit from surgery. The decision to recommend surgery is based on physical exam and careful evaluation of your pet's history.

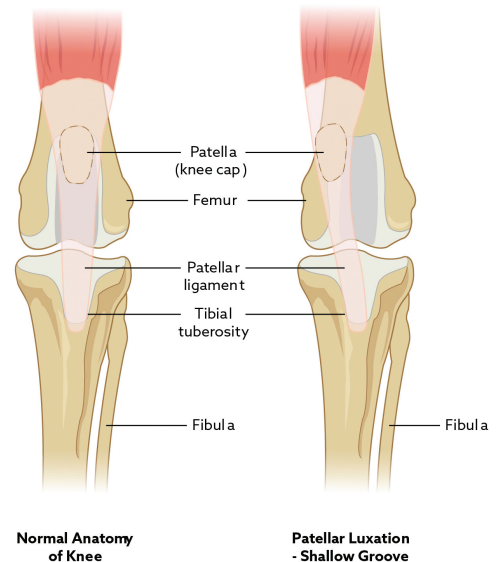
Surgery for an MPL typically involves multiple procedures made through a single incision over the joint while your pet is under anesthesia. The specific procedures performed depends on your pet's anatomy. Most commonly, the groove that the patella sits in is deepened, patellar tendon attachment is moved to allow better alignment, and the soft tissues around the joint are altered. Minor implants are usually placed to hold these bony alterations in place as they heal (see figure below). Occasionally an angular limb deformity requires correction. This is most common in large breed dogs.

Most patients spend one night in the hospital following surgery. Upon discharge, your pet will go home on pain medications and activity is severely restricted for 6-8 weeks. This is a critical part of healing and necessary for a successful outcome.



Post-surgical MPL radiograph

Two weeks after surgery, your pet will have a recheck visit. At this time, physical rehabilitation will be encouraged. Therapies can be done at home and/or with the CVRC Physical Rehabilitation Department. Six to 8 weeks after surgery, an exam and x-rays will be performed to confirm the bone is healing. If the bone is sufficiently healed, a slow re-introduction to your pet's normal activity will be recommended. In general, prognosis for a successful outcome following surgery is good to excellent. Risks are low but factors include anesthesia, bleeding, infection, healing complications, and re-luxation.



### GRADE I

Knee cap can be manipulated out of its groove, but returns to its normal position

### GRADE II

Knee cap rides out of its groove occasionally and can be replaced in the groove by manipulation

### GRADE III

Knee cap rides out of its groove most of the time but can be replaced in the groove via manipulation

### GRADE IV

Knee cap rides out of its groove all the time and cannot be replaced inside the groove

### For more information

Please feel free to reach out to our Surgery Department if you have any questions.

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