

Ruptured Cranial Cruciate Ligament

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Overview

The cranial cruciate ligament is located within the knee joint and acts to stabilize the femur on the tibia. The ligament can be torn as a result of an acute traumatic event or more commonly it ruptures due to a slow progressive breakdown of the ligament.

When the tear is sudden and complete, lameness may be severe and such that your pet refuses to bear weight on the leg. When the tear is partial or incomplete an intermittent lameness that is more noticeable after heavy exercise may be seen. Your dog may seem more lame on some days than others.

In large dogs (greater than 30 pounds), the joint usually becomes arthritic and the joint thickens if surgical stabilization is not performed.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Ruptured cranial cruciate ligament is generally diagnosed by history, complete physical examination including a thorough orthopedic exam and x-rays.
- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. For small dogs, strict confinement, weight loss and anti-inflammatory medication may be sufficient. In larger dogs over 30 pounds or smaller dogs that don't respond to conservative treatment in 2 months, surgical correction is recommended. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Lameness or limping on a back leg
- Painfulness
- Reluctant to walk

**Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*

