



Arbor Animal News

A Quarterly publication from Arbor Animal Clinic

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Doctor's Corner: Orthopedics

Knee Problems in Dogs



Lameness in one rear leg is a common reason for us to examine a dog. There are many causes of lameness from injuries to growth disorders in young dogs and arthritis in older dogs. Knee problems are one of the most common serious orthopedic diseases we see and two are common. The first is called **Medially Luxating Patella (MLP)**. This occurs when the knee cap moves from its normal position at the front of the knee towards the middle. It is most common in small breed dogs which are structurally "bow-legged". There are four grades of MLP which can occur which indicates how severe the knee cap problem is. Many dogs require surgery to regain normal limb function and comfort although some very small dogs with grade 1 or 2 that remain stable over time can be managed without surgery.

The other knee problem we see is **Cranial Cruciate Ligament (CCL)** rupture. In humans it is also common, especially among athletes, and is called Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) rupture. The name difference has to do with the fact that humans stand erect and dogs walk on all four legs. CCL ruptures in dogs can be due to an injury but are often predisposed by other factors such as breed, obesity, and other knee disorders (like MLP). Large breed dogs are the most prone with Rottweilers being the most predisposed. Also, dogs which have had CCL rupture in one knee are more apt to have it occur in the other knee (often within a year) indicating that it is likely a genetic weakness of the knee itself.

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Dogs with torn cruciates almost always need surgery to be able to walk normally again and be pain free. Doing the surgery soon after the diagnosis is important because with the ligament torn, the knee is unstable. Wear between the bones and the cartilage in the knee becomes abnormal, and the joint begins to develop degenerative changes. Bone spurs called osteophytes develop, resulting in chronic pain and loss of joint motion. This process can be stopped by surgery but cannot be reversed once it is already present. At Arbor Animal Clinic, we offer the two types of surgery most commonly performed for torn cruciates: Tibial Plateau Leveling Osteotomy (TPLO) and Extracapsular Repair. Each of these surgical procedures has its pros and cons and we always discuss which would be best given your dog's age, size, and fitness level. During surgery we also inspect the knee cartilage (meniscus) for tears and damage and address that during the surgery if needed. Rehabilitation following surgery can take 6-8 weeks. It is a very serious condition but fortunately we can offer a treatment that allows most dogs to return to a normal life without knee pain and disability.

Would you like to receive your pets reminders by email? If so, please call our office and let us know. We are happy to provide this service!



Arbor Vets on TV

Have you seen our vets on TV??? We are now on KEYE (Channel 5, CBS) *We Are Austin Live* between 4 and 5 pm every third Friday of each month to do a "Pet Stop" segment talking about pet health issues. If you have missed us and want to see past segments—they are [now on our website](#) as links on the **Informational Videos** page.

OCTOBER:

Is Now



Dental Month, Too

As many of you know, we have celebrated National Dental Month in February for years. Our clients have taken advantage of the savings we offer on cat and dog dentals done in February and we started offering the same special in October two years ago because February appointments filled up so quickly. Now our October dental appointments also fill up quickly - **so call early if you want to take advantage of the special savings offered in October.** See the back side of this newsletter for details. Dental health for pets starts with an exam of the oral cavity. We do dental exams during your pet's annual visit, but it can be scheduled at anytime. If needed, a dental cleaning in our clinic will be recommended. If advanced dental disease is present, we will address that during the dental procedure as well. Feel free to discuss this with our staff. Because anesthesia is necessary to do a thorough cleaning, blood tests to screen for other health problems are recommended before the procedure.

Did you know....that researchers at Texas A&M University are working on a cure for rabies under a new grant funded by the Department of Defense? Wow!

Do you know someone who needs a great vet? Just tell them to mention your name when they come in. They will receive a \$10 off coupon in the mail for their next visit, and you will receive a coupon for the same, just for referring them.