

PATELLAR LUXATION

The patella (knee cap) is a movable bone located over the stifle (knee) joint, within the ligaments that connect the muscles of the thigh to the lower leg. When the patella functions correctly, the dog can use the leg well. Patellar luxation is a dislocation of the patella most often seen in small dogs. Most affected animals are born with a poorly formed joint, and usually both knees are involved. A fall or twisting injury may aggravate the already existing condition.

The most common manifestation of this "trick knee" condition is a dog who occasionally holds the leg up while running but spontaneously starts using it again. This happens as the patella pops in and out of place. Often the dog will give out a short cry or yelp when this happens.

To prevent crippling arthritis due to the abnormal friction of the moving patella, surgery is often recommended. Several different types of surgery have been developed and your doctor will describe the one he or she feels will help your pet.

