



**Pets Haven  
Foundation**  
www.petshaven.org.au

# CRUCIATE LIGAMENT

## RUPTURE & REPAIR



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### What are the signs of cruciate rupture?

Signs vary between patient, but common signs include:

- sudden onset limping in a hind limb
- often dogs are so painful they are unable to weight bare
- may initially improve with rest, but will get worse over a period of weeks

### What causes the ligament to rupture?

There are a few ways in which rupture can occur.

- a young energetic dog playing/jumping who turns or lands the wrong way - usually large breed dogs
- repeated low level injury or stress to the ligament - usually older overweight dogs
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### Diagnosis

Diagnosis comes from a physical examination of the knee to assess something known as 'cranial drawer' as well as pain and reduced range of motion combined with X-rays to



## Cruciate ligament rupture

The cranial cruciate ligament (CCL) is one of a few ligaments located in the knee joint. Many people will know the cruciate ligament as the ACL. A ruptured cruciate ligament is the most common knee injury in dogs. In up to 30% of cases, dogs can present with bilateral ligament rupture, meaning that both knees are affected. Once the ligament is ruptured, the knee joint becomes unstable. This results in abnormal wear of the bones and cartilage and leads to degenerative joint disease and arthritis. It can also predispose the other ligaments in the joint, such as the meniscus, to also rupture.

### Treatment

Treatment of CCL rupture requires surgical repair. There are many surgical repair techniques available. At Pets Haven Veterinary Clinic we offer two surgical options - Extracapsular Repair and TPLO.

**Extracapsular Repair** - ideal for small dogs less than 15kg in weight. The surgery involves opening the knee joint and removing the torn ligament(s). A strong synthetic suture is then drilled into the tibia and fabella bones to create an artificial ligament and stabilise the joint

**Tibial plateau levelling osteotomy (TPLO)** - ideal for dogs over 15kg in weight. The surgery involves making a cut and rotation of the tibial bone which is then plated into position. This changes the angle of the knee so that the ligament is no longer needed for stability.

Following surgery, dogs are placed on a strict rehabilitation and regime. Dogs are crated/confined for a few weeks immediately after surgery, followed by a slow introduction back to exercise. Dogs are also given anti-inflammatory and pain medications after surgery.