

# Return 2 Motion

The cranial cruciate ligament (CCL), which is similar to the ACL in people, is a very important stabilizer of the canine knee joint. Rupture of this ligament is one of the most common causes of rear leg lameness in the dog.

CCL disease is due to a combination of factors, including age, obesity, genetics, conformation (skeletal shape), and breed. Breeds that are at higher risk to tear their CCL include Labrador retriever, Golden retriever, Rottweiler, Mastiff, Newfoundland, Akita, St. Bernard, Chesapeake Bay retriever, and American Staffordshire terrier (Pitbulls).

In dogs, rupture of the CCL is a result of slow degeneration that has been occurring over months to years, rather than an acute injury like it is in people. Due to this degeneration, dogs who rupture one of their CCL's have a 50% chance of tearing the opposite side within 6 months to 1 year.

When a dog has a full CCL tear, they typically will not put any weight on that leg initially, but their lameness will improve over the course of 1 to 2 weeks as the inflammation subsides. Even though your pet appears to improve, arthritis and muscle loss will still set in quickly. For this reason, implementing glucosamine supplements and rehabilitation early on is imperative for long term joint health.

CCL rupture is diagnosed by both manual manipulation, as well as changes on x-rays. In most cases, surgical repair by an orthopedic surgeon is the best treatment option. Regardless of whether you elect to pursue surgery or medical management, rehabilitation post injury is extremely important to prevent muscle loss, improve range of motion, and slow the progression of arthritis. Rehabilitation should start immediately after surgery (if performed) and typically include a regimen of passive range of motion, balancing exercises, and strengthening exercises that are selected for your pet's specific needs. We also utilize acupuncture and laser therapy for additional pain relief during recovery.