

All stifles that have suffered any ligament damage, will start to undergo progressive degenerative arthritic changes – *even if surgery is performed immediately*. Rapid degeneration before surgery and **greatly slowed** after surgery, but progressive none-the-less. For this reason the protective **Cartrophen** course is highly recommended. We will provide detailed information on Cartrophen.

Approximately 15% of dogs that have suffered a ruptured cruciate will also rupture their other cruciate either before surgery or during the 3 months convalescence after surgery. Limiting exercise to lead walking and swimming and avoiding slippery floors during this period will minimize this risk.

My dog's cruciate was found to be partially torn and not ruptured, what treatment is advisable?

According to studies done on partial ruptures, almost all rupture soon after the partial tear – usually within a few weeks to months.

However, complete cage confinement for 3 MONTHS reduces the chance of full rupture.

Stabilization of the joint, using the same technique as for cruciate rupture, provides strong support for the partially torn ligament and allows it to heal. Because damage in the joint is limited and the joint stabilized, the result is far better long-term than if the ligament had ruptured. Cartrophen is still recommended.

What special instructions are there for post-operative care?

Post anaesthetic and surgical wound management will be covered in a detailed information sheet upon your dog's discharge.

Regarding the cruciate repair, please allow complete rest for 14 days. Confine in a cage if necessary and keep separate from other dogs and sources of excitement (kids?). After 14 days you may begin slow, short but gradually increasing lead walks (a few metres only initially). You will find that your dog will prefer to carry its leg if it goes any faster than a walk. A slow walk encourages use of the recovering leg.

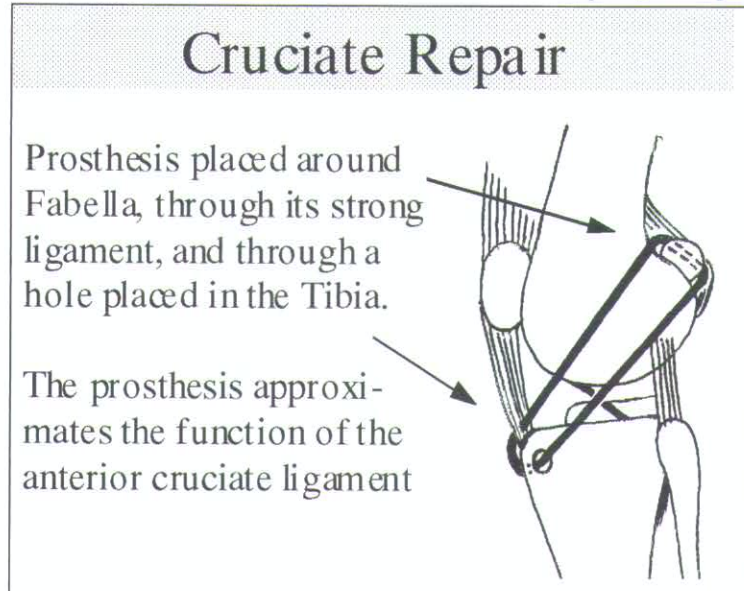
The rate of recovery is highly variable and depends on: the amount of damage sustained by the joint, the length of time until surgery, the individual patient's rate of healing, the rate of development of arthritic degeneration, and the ability of the owner to provide a confined, non-slippery environment and limit excitable behaviour.

Generally the quickest healers will appear almost 100% within 6–8 weeks, but up to 3 months is more common.

Will my dog require pain relief ?

Yes, most definitely. Pain relief is always provided in surgery and we recommended it maintained for as long as is required. For most dogs, 2 to 3 weeks is usually adequate.

The most appropriate pain relief that does not erode the already compromised cartilage and does not antagonize the function of Cartrophen, is *Carprofen/Rimadyl*.



Pain is minimised by looking after the patient i.e. limiting activity and providing a safe, comfortable environment. Remember that your dog has undergone orthopaedic surgery, which causes discomfort for many months in humans.

A common problem seen is over-activity too soon after surgery, causing inflammation in the tissues around the prosthesis due to excessive movement

between the prosthesis and the adjacent tissue. Once healing is complete, the prosthesis is surrounded and imbedded in fibrous scar tissue and causes no pain. Swimming prior to complete healing may cause discomfort due to this fact – the vigorous kicking action causing movement between prosthesis and tissue.

After approximately 6-8 weeks, swimming is encouraged, as it will provide excellent exercise for the muscles – assisting in returning them to normal strength. Muscles on the affected leg do atrophy (reduce in size) because of decreased activity in that leg.