Lateral Fabellotibial Suture CCL Repair

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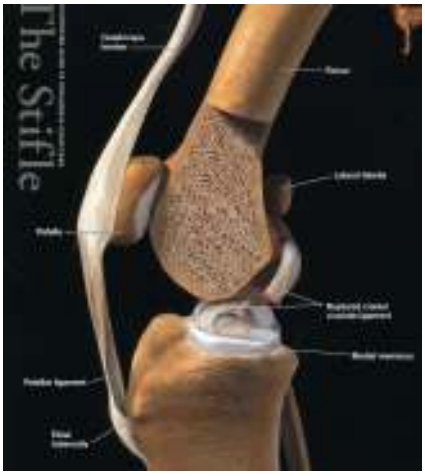
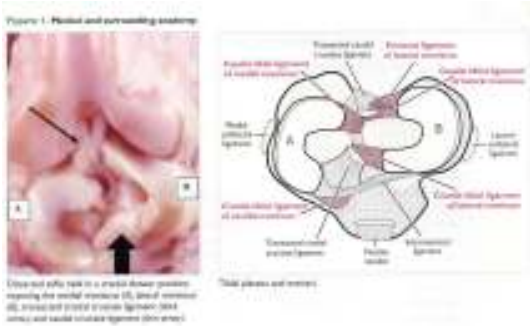
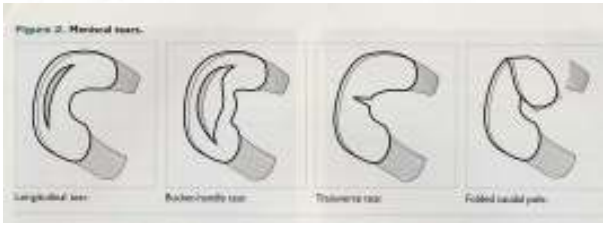


Cranial cruciate ligament (CCL) rupture is a very common injury in the dog. The cranial and caudal cruciate ligaments help to stabilize the stifle (knee) as the joint moves through a normal range of motion. The CCL can rupture due to trauma or as a result of degeneration of its structure. The meniscal cartilages also help to provide stability and act as shock absorbers in the joint. When the CCL is injured the femur is free to slide down the tibial slope and push the tibia forward or cranial. This results in pain, inflammation, increased joint fluid (effusion) and eventually arthritis in the joint.

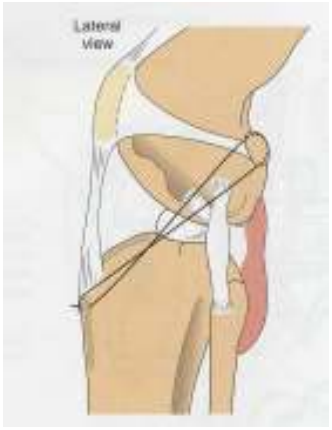


The medial meniscus can often be injured after CCL rupture if the femur crushes it. Joint exploration is required to inspect for meniscal injury. The damaged portion of the meniscus is excised to reduce further injury and inflammation. Corrective surgery is then performed to stabilize the joint and return the limb back to function.

The **Lateral Fabellotibial Suture technique** stabilizes the CCL deficient stifle by using heavy gauge suture material to replace the stabilizing function of the ligament. The sutures prevent the abnormal forward tibial movement while still permitting flexion and extension of the joint. Over the initial months post surgery the body develops a fibrous tissue reaction around the stifle and sutures which ultimately provides more permanent stability.



The fibrous tissue reaction must mature before the dog can return to full activity. Off-leash activity, running and jumping must be avoided until the fibrous tissue repair has matured (~12-16 weeks). The lateral fabellotibial suture technique can return the majority of dogs back to full activity. It is most beneficial for small and medium breeds or those dogs that are more sedentary in their lifestyle. A risk of premature suture loosening is a concern in large breed and active dogs.



Physical therapy after surgery helps to restore and strengthen the muscles of the hind limb. Controlled activity and prescribed exercises will help result in successful outcomes after CCL surgery.

Illustrations are reproduced from the following sources:
Image 1: Novartis Animal Health "An Illustrated Guide to Orthopedic Conditions"
Images 2 & 3: Briggs KK. The Canine Meniscus: Injury and Treatment. Compendium. 2004, pp 687-695.
Image 4: Fossum TW. Small Animal Surgery. 2nd ed. Mosby St Louis, 2002