



Patella Luxation

Interesting Case THE SKIPPING DOG

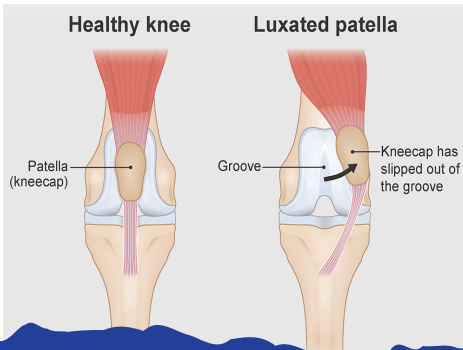
by Abby Robertson BVSc

On these beautiful summer days, we are likely out walking and running with our canine friends. A relatively common thing that we see in our smaller dogs is skipping, where they intermittently hop on either one or both hind legs. Because they don't seem to be in any pain and seem normal between episodes, we are at risk of thinking this is normal behaviour. In reality, this is most likely due to a condition called luxating patella (kneecap). In unaffected animals, the patella sits in a groove at the bottom of the thigh bone. When an animal bends its knee, the patella slides up and down the groove, held in place by ligaments on either side. However, some animals are born with a groove too shallow or a ligament that attaches in the wrong place on the shin bone, pulling the patella out of its groove as the knee bends.

Patella luxation is most often seen in toy and miniature breed dogs such as Jack Russell and Yorkshire Terriers, Poodles and Chihuahuas but can also occur in larger breed dogs.

In animals with mild disease, a luxating patella may not cause significant problems and animals may go through life without needing any treatment. However, if the patella is periodically or always luxated, or if the luxation is causing lameness, then surgery to stabilise the kneecap in its groove and allow normal limb function is recommended.

If you have a dog that skips when it runs, then please come and see one of our friendly vets who will be able to check the patella and help you make decisions to keep your dog fit for many years.



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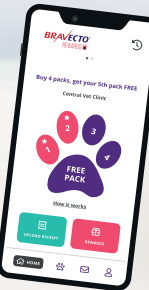
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