

# CRANIAL CRUCIATE LIGAMENT (CCL) TEARS

*Sage Canine Rehabilitation Center*



## UNDERSTANDING CRANIAL CRUCIATE LIGAMENT (CCL) TEARS

The CCL, similar to the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in humans, is a critical stabilizing ligament in your dog's knee joint. A CCL tear, also known as a torn ACL, is a painful and debilitating injury that can occur due to various factors such as age, breed predisposition, obesity, and injury. When the CCL is damaged, it can lead to lameness, joint instability, and secondary osteoarthritis.

## TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR CCL TEARS

Treatment for CCL tears varies based on the severity of the injury, your dog's age, activity level, and overall health. Here are the primary treatment options:

**Conservative Management:** This approach involves rest, anti-inflammatory medications, bracing, and/or physical therapy. It is generally reserved for small dogs, less active dogs, or when surgery is not an option.

**Surgical Repair:** Surgery is often the most effective treatment for CCL tears and aims to stabilize the knee joint. There are several surgical techniques available, below are the most common options:

- **Extracapsular Repair:** This technique uses a strong suture material to stabilize the joint.
- **TPLO (Tibial Plateau Leveling Osteotomy):** TPLO alters the angle of the shin bone to prevent abnormal joint movement.
- **TTA (Tibial Tuberosity Advancement):** TTA repositions a part of the shin bone to alter the biomechanics of the knee joint to stabilize the joint

## SIGNS THAT YOUR DOG MAY HAVE A CCL TEAR INCLUDE:

- **Limping or lameness:** Often sudden and severe, typically favoring one hind leg.
- **Decreased activity:** Your dog may be less willing to engage in physical activities.
- **Swelling:** There may be swelling around the knee joint.
- **Difficulty rising or sitting:** Your dog may have trouble getting up or lying down.
- **Pain and discomfort:** They may yelp or show signs of pain when the affected leg is touched.







## PREVENTING CCL TEARS

While not all CCL tears can be prevented, below are ways to help reduce the risk of CCL tears:

- Maintaining a healthy weight for your dog
- Providing regular exercise
- Avoiding excessive jumping or running on hard surfaces

**Physical therapy and rehabilitation can help your dog, either post-surgery or as part of conservative management, to regain strength, mobility, and function in the affected leg.**

Goals of Physical Therapy Treatment:

1. **Pain Management:** modalities such as LASER, electrical stimulation, PEMF, and manual therapy can help alleviate pain and reduce inflammation in the injured joint.
2. **Restoring Mobility:** Therapeutic exercises and hydrotherapy are designed to improve your dog's range of motion and overall mobility.
3. **Strengthening Muscles:** CCL injuries often lead to muscle atrophy. Physical therapy helps rebuild muscle strength to support the affected joint.
4. **Enhancing Balance and Coordination:** Therapists work on improving your dog's balance and coordination, which is crucial for a full recovery.
5. **Preventing Secondary Injuries:** By addressing the underlying issues, physical therapy helps reduce the risk of secondary injuries that can occur due to compensatory movements.



**If you suspect your dog may have a CCL tear or if you have any concerns about their joint health, please do not hesitate to contact our clinic!**

229 10th St.  
Jersey City, NJ 07302

201-499-1101 

rehab@sagevetcenter.com 

sagevetcenter.com/rehab-therapy 

@sagecaninerehab 

