

Tibial Plateau Levelling Osteotomy

Understanding TPLO Surgery

A **Tibial Plateau Levelling Osteotomy (TPLO)** is a surgical procedure used to stabilise the knee (stifle) when the cranial cruciate ligament has ruptured.

The cranial cruciate ligament is one of the main structures that keeps the knee stable during movement. In a healthy joint, it prevents the thigh bone (femur) from sliding backwards over the shin bone (tibia) when your dog bears weight and helps control unwanted rotation within the joint.

When this ligament is damaged or ruptured, the knee becomes unstable. This instability leads to pain, inflammation, and progressive arthritis if left untreated. TPLO surgery works by changing the way forces act through the knee, allowing your dog to bear weight comfortably without relying on the damaged ligament.

The Procedure

The surgery begins with a careful examination of the joint. Any remnants of the damaged ligament are removed, and the menisci (the joint's cartilage cushions) are thoroughly checked. If a meniscus is found to be damaged, this is addressed at the same time.

During the TPLO procedure, the top of the tibia is carefully cut and rotated to create a more stable angle within the knee. This new position is secured using a specially designed bone plate and screws. By altering the joint mechanics in this way, the forward sliding movement within the knee is eliminated, allowing the joint to function more comfortably during walking and weight bearing.

Aftercare and Recovery

TPLO is a major orthopaedic procedure, and **aftercare is just as important as the surgery itself**.

Strict exercise restriction is essential for the first **6–8 weeks** following surgery. This usually means confinement to a small safe area of the house, lead-only toilet breaks, avoiding stairs and slippery surfaces, and no jumping on or off furniture. Our rehabilitation team will guide you on when and how gentle lead walking can be safely introduced, based on your dog's individual progress.

This period of controlled rest is a critical part of healing. Too much activity too soon significantly increases the risk of complications.

Your dog will be sent home with pain relief medication, and sometimes antibiotics. Please follow all instructions carefully and contact your first opinion vet or us immediately if you notice any changes in behaviour, vomiting, diarrhoea, or signs of discomfort.

Your nurse and physiotherapist will make arrangements for all follow-up appointments before you leave us after your pet's surgery and will provide you with a separate information sheet on post-operative rehabilitation. Please ask as many questions as you need to and if you forget something, please don't hesitate to contact us via the Lupa App, email or telephone.