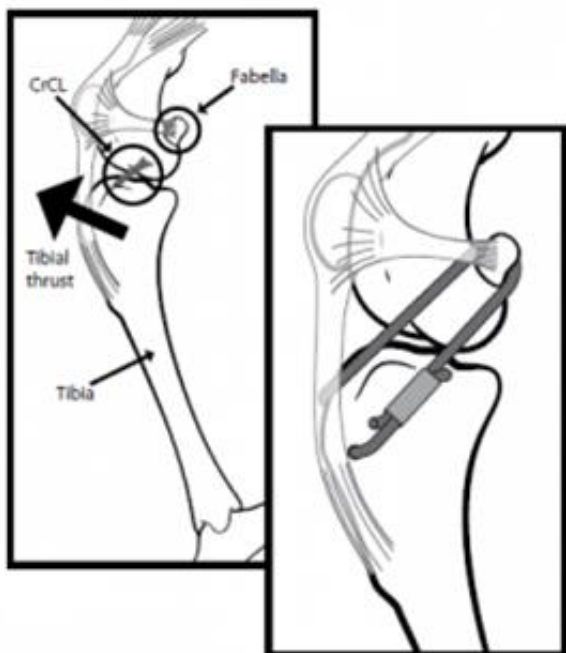


Extracapsular Stabilization (ECS) Surgery

Extracapsular Stabilization (ECS) is a static stabilization technique used for dogs and cats to treat partial or complete Cranial Cruciate Ligament (CCL) tears. The ECS counteracts tibial motion or “thrust” by anchoring the tibia to the femur with a specially placed suture. To accomplish this, a monofilament or braided suture material is passed



around the fabella (a pea-sized bone attached to the femur). The suture is then passed through a bone tunnel created at the front of the tibia and looped back and attached to itself. Variations of this procedure (for instance, “tightrope”) exist. With this surgery, the joint is no longer dependent on the cranial cruciate ligament for its stability, but it is dependent upon the strength of the suture and its anchor points.

Reasons for performing an ECS:

Stabilization of a canine or feline knee joint which is unstable due to the knee having a partial or complete tear of the CCL.

Risks and complications: The majority of ECS operations are uneventful and are not associated with complications, however, this is a major procedure and the following complications are possible though, in our experience, rare:

- surgical infection
- implant loosening at anchor points (return to positive tibial thrust)
- implant failure
- persistent lameness (may also be secondary to arthritis)

Risks of General Anesthesia: We listen closely to your pet’s medical history and carefully review any provided medical records. Your pet will have a detailed physical exam, appropriate pre-operative screening blood tests, and possibly radiographs to identify and control anesthetic risk factors. Even with these measures, anesthesia remains a small, but present risk. For this reason, we use the safest intravenous and inhalational anesthetics. Our anesthesia doctor and highly experienced technical staff are well trained in the administration and monitoring of all types of sedation and general anesthesia. Your pet is carefully monitored by a formally trained and experienced

Extracapsular Stabilization (ECS) Surgery

licensed technician during anesthesia and recovery, and is under the care of a veterinarian and veterinary staff the night following the procedure.

Prognosis and General Considerations: Overall, your pet should make slow, steady progress after ECS surgery. By the time you return for your follow-up visit at 8 weeks, we expect to see 60% to 70% of normal weight bearing. Gradual improvement is predicted until six months post-operatively. However, with this procedure we tend to see intermittent lameness more commonly.

At Home: Your pet will typically go home the day after surgery. During your scheduled discharge appointment, we will review our detailed, written home care instructions. We will also answer any questions and address any concerns that you may have at that time.

- Expect your pet's limb to have some degree of swelling and bruising during the first 7-10 days after surgery. To reduce swelling and increase comfort, you can apply cool compresses to the limb for a few minutes twice daily during the initial 2 days after surgery, followed by warm compresses for 2-3 days.
- We will provide medications for discomfort during the post-operative period.
- In general, you should plan for 12 weeks of activity restriction after surgery.
- We recommend that you keep your pet in relative confinement (crate, kennel, smaller room with a baby gate, "mud" room, laundry room) when unsupervised.
- Slow, short leash walks 3-5 times per day on a level surface are recommended. If your pet tends to pull on the leash, consider a Gentle Leader™, pinch collar, or similar device to discourage this behavior.
- We would like to re-evaluate your pet 8 weeks after surgery. The amount of exercise and activity will be adjusted at this evaluation, but in general activity will be increased gradually between the 8th and 12th week after surgery.