

Robinson Veterinary Services

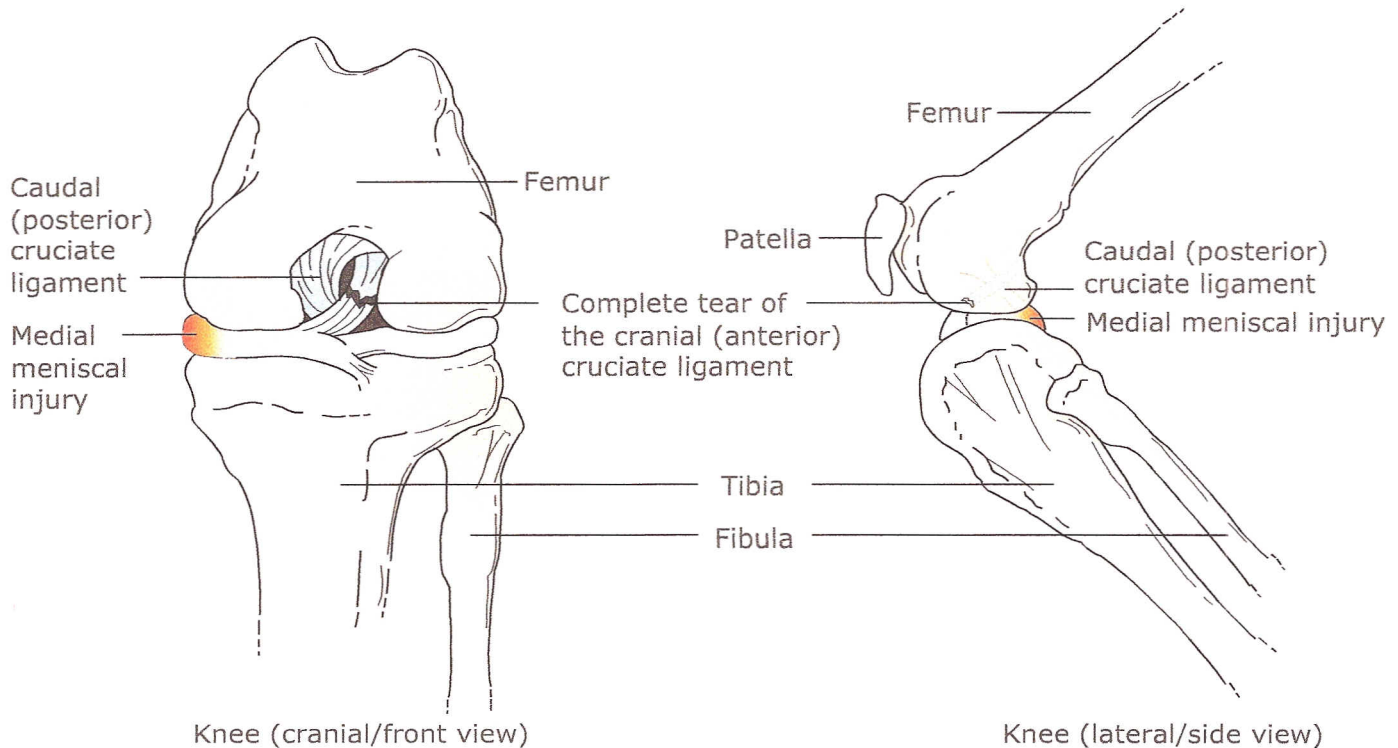
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Cruciate Ligament: Ruptured cruciate ligaments.



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The knee joint has a number of ligaments that maintain its proper alignment. The paired cruciate ligaments (called the cranial and caudal cruciate ligaments) prevent the femur from sliding forward on the tibia. Cranial cruciate ligament injury is the most common ligament injury in dogs and occurs occasionally in cats. The ligament may stretch, tear, or rupture. An acute rupture happens when the knee is forcibly rotated or is twisted excessively, as can occur when a dog stumbles during running over uneven ground or suddenly changes direction in mid-stride. A chronic form of cruciate disease is more insidious, and occurs mainly in middle-aged obese animals. In this form of disease, the ligaments are weaker than normal and slowly degenerate until they rupture completely. Cranial cruciate ligament rupture is diagnosed by demonstrating an abnormal range of motion in the joint (called the drawer sign). It is usually necessary to sedate the patient for this examination. See our Client Education Handout Series for further information.