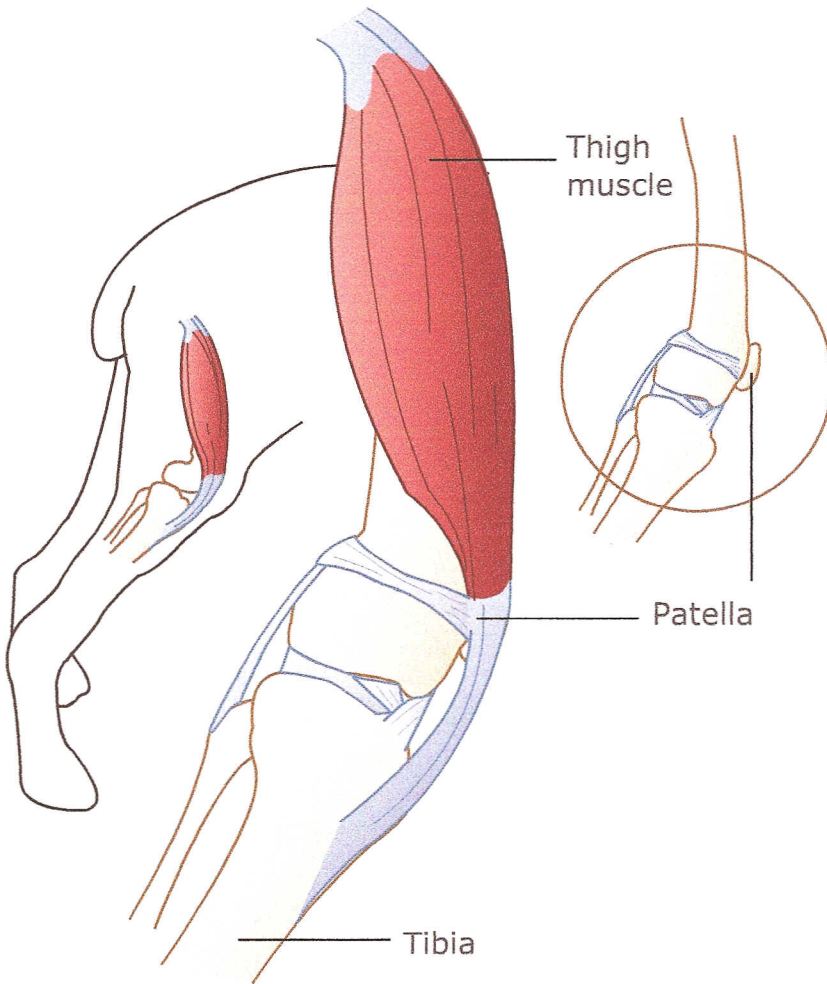


**Patella:** Patella or Kneecap location and description.



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The patellar ligament is an extension of the large quadriceps muscle of the thigh. When this powerful thigh muscle contracts, it pulls on the ligament and straightens the knee joint. During contraction and relaxation of the muscle, the patella slides back and forth along its groove, keeping the ligament and bones aligned properly. This allows the knee joint to move properly, acting as a hinge between the upper and lower leg. Other ligaments in the knee assist this action by preventing motion in other directions such as side to side or back and forth. Problems with the knee joint are the result of structural abnormalities with the patellar apparatus, or are the result of traumatic rupture of a ligament. Further details on specific abnormalities can be found in the relevant illustrations, or by referring to our Client Education Handout Series.