

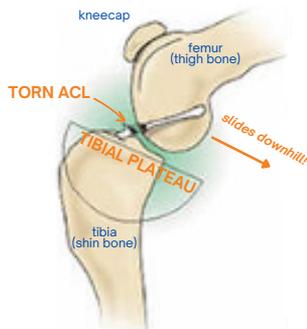
# TPLO - Tibial Plateau Leveling Osteotomy

## Let's start with some knee anatomy...

The **tibial plateau** is the contact point between the femur (thigh bone) and tibia (shin bone). It slopes downhill toward your dog's tail.

A normal ACL keeps the femur from sliding downhill.

When the ACL tears, every step hurts because the femur is sliding downhill on the tibia. Even a partial tear of the ACL can be very painful.



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## What can I do to help my dog?

A torn ACL cannot be sutured back together, and it never heals on its own.

Pain medication, rest, & knee braces may mask discomfort temporarily, but they are not a good long-term solution.

**Surgery** is the best way to get your dog back to running, playing, and enjoying life. While there are several ways to repair a torn ACL, because of your dog's body weight, lifestyle, or activity level, your veterinarian is recommending a **TPLO**.

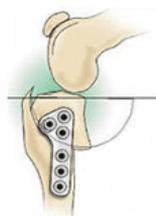
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## How does a TPLO work?

TPLO prevents the femur from sliding downhill on the tibial plateau by eliminating the hill entirely (leveling the plateau). In large or active dogs, we cannot simply replace the torn ACL with an artificial ligament because there are no materials strong enough to last.

A curved cut is made through the top of the tibia so that the tibial plateau can be rotated into a nearly horizontal position. Then, it is locked in place with a bone plate and screws.

The bone heals in 8-12 weeks. After that, the plate and screws are no longer needed, but because removing them requires a second surgery, they are typically left in place unless they are causing a problem.



## What does recovery look like?

50% of dogs will put some weight on the leg within 24-48 hours.

By 8 weeks, most dogs walk with only a mild limp.

It will take a full 4-6 months to get back to “normal”, but even then, there can be the occasional “off” day.

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## Won't my pet be in pain?

Any major orthopedic surgery causes some short-term discomfort. We use a multi-faceted approach to keep your pet as comfortable as possible.

Injections of strong intravenous pain medication are given before, during, and after surgery.

Right before the end of surgery, a series of numbing injections is given that partially numbs the surgery site for 72 hours.

A combination of oral pain medications will be sent home as well.

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## Exercise restriction is VERY important for the first 8 weeks

**No running, jumping, or playing for 8 weeks after surgery.** Sedatives will be sent home with your pet to help keep them quiet once they're feeling better.

If your dog is too active before the bone has a chance to fully heal, it can cause the implants to loosen and will result in a second surgery. This means extra expense for you and extra pain for your pet.

Your pet cannot use the stairs or jump on & off furniture for the first 8 weeks. It can be very helpful to confine your pet to an oversized crate when they are not under your direct supervision.

It's a good idea to prepare yourself and your home environment **before** surgery - visit the [ocmobilesurgery.com](http://ocmobilesurgery.com) **FAQs** for hints and tips.

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## Recheck Schedule

Sutures are removed after 2 weeks.

X-rays are taken after 8 weeks to monitor how the bone is healing.

If everything looks good, you will be given a plan to gradually return your pet to full exercise over the following 4 weeks.

Remember that full recovery may take as long as 6 months, but the first 8 weeks are the most critical.



Visit [ocmobilesurgery.com](http://ocmobilesurgery.com) for more info!