

# Animal Medical Services

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Alexandria, Kingsford and Brookvale South

Veterinary Hospitals

And Mobile Veterinary Services

## JULY

## NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first newsletter for Animal Medical Services. This will be a regular update on some interesting cases at our three clinics - Alexandria, Kingsford and Brookvale South veterinary hospitals and an insight to the committed staff that work there.

### Charlie's Wobbly Knee

By Dr Milan Savkovic

When a dog starts limping, that is certainly a cause of concern for every dog owner. The most natural reaction for majority of people is to take the dog to the vet for examination. This is exactly how we met Charlie a 3 year old male labradoodle.

Charlie has been a very healthy and happy dog apart from the occasional limp in the left hind leg since the age of 10 months. There was no history of any injury to that leg as far as the owner could tell. Unfortunately for Charlie, the limping worsened as he got bigger and eventually he could not carry full weight on that leg and was limping almost all the time.

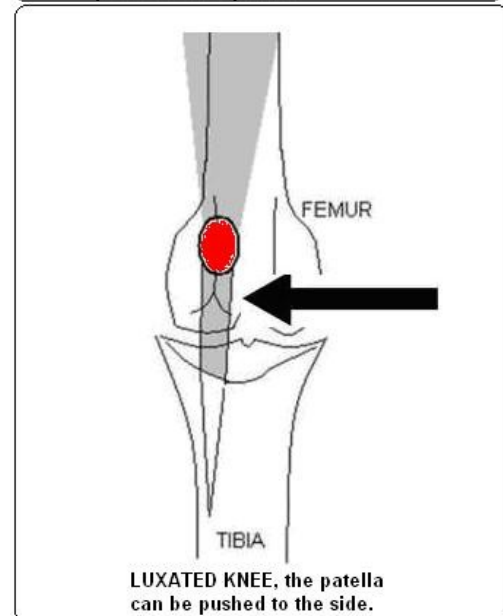
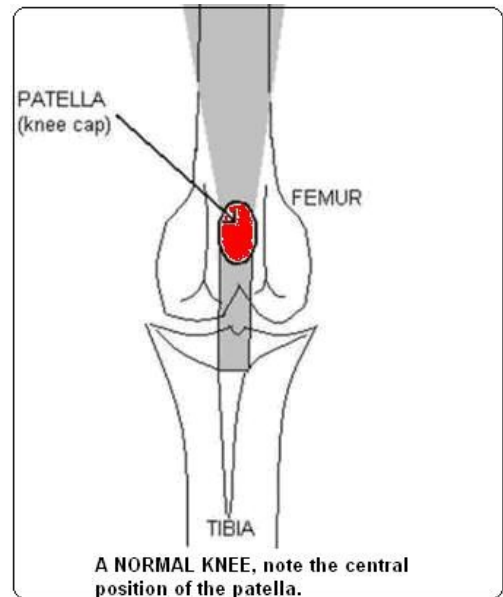
When I saw Charlie, I found that the left knee joint was not completely normal and the problem was due to abnormal position of the knee cap. The knee cap (patella) was easily pushed (luxated) aside from its normal position in the centre of the knee joint and it would stay there even after the joint was repeatedly flexed and extended (and Charlie did not like this at all).



This disorder can be managed without the need for surgery (through anti-inflammatories) if the dog is not showing any signs of pain. This is especially the case in smaller breeds of dogs, but because of the severity of the problem in this particular case it was recommended that Charlie undergoes a major orthopaedic surgery at Brookvale South Veterinary Hospital to repair medial patella luxation.

The surgery was scheduled for the next day. We took a blood sample before starting with general anaesthesia to check if there are any abnormalities in the function of his internal organs. Once Charlie was anaesthetised, further support in the way of intravenous fluids, pain relief medications and antibiotics were

provided. Digital radiographs revealed that Charlie already had arthritic changes in the left knee joint due to long term knee cap instability.



Surgical repair was a three step process:

1. The point of attachment of the patellar ligament was moved and transplanted surgically to its proper location to correct the misalignment.

2. The groove in the femur was deepened so the patella would stay in place.

3. The capsule around the joint was tightened (the joint capsule would have stretched during the period of luxation).

I saw Charlie again in 5 days for a bandage change and recheck. He was able to touch ground with his left leg, which was very good result after such a major surgery. Charlie had a course of injections to increase joint fluid formation and help reduce advancement of the osteoarthritis. Usually recovery after this type of surgery can take 8 to 12 weeks but after 4 weeks Charlie was already able to bear full weight on the left hind leg. Charlie's owners continued with physiotherapy and 4 months after surgery. Now he is back to normal and doing what he likes best: chase cats, digging in the park and swimming in the lagoon.

## Testimonial from Charlie's owner Mrs C. Reid:

*Dear Dr Milan and the team at Brookvale South Vet,*

*Thank you very much for looking after Charlie. He recovered very well and quickly after surgery. He is again happy and boisterous as he is not bothered with the leg and can run and play with his friends in the park. His leg looks great, like he never had any problems with it at all! Charlie is telling all his friends how good and caring all of you guys are.*

*Many thanks again from,  
Charlie and Carol*

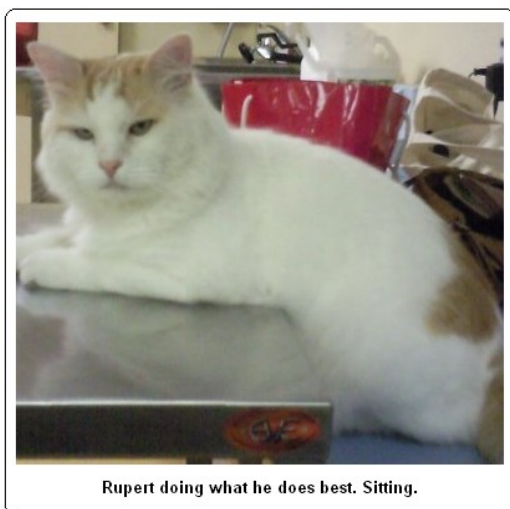
## Staff Profile



Dr Milan Savkovic, Brookvale South Vet.

**Dr Milan Savkovic** has been practicing as a veterinary surgeon for the past 16 years and has considerable experience in every aspect of the small animal medicine and surgery. He's worked for the RSPCA, Specialist Animal Hospital in Strathfield and a number of other practices in Sydney before taking a position in Brookvale South Veterinary Hospital. Milan is a Northern Beaches local and in his spare time enjoys beach and quality time with his family.

### Rupert the cat.



Rupert doing what he does best. Sitting.

Rupert is a rescue cat brought into Alexandria Vet Hospital (AVH) by a World League Protection Association (WLPA) member. He was in poor condition, emaciated and required socialisation. It was soon

discovered that Rupert also had a heart murmur. Despite his tough exterior Rupert has a heart of gold. All the staff at AVH fell in love with Rupert's feisty personality and his motherly care for the other adoption kittens in hospital. He's now been at the clinic for 10 months and we are still in the search for Rupert to go to a warm and loving family.

## Best Pet Name Award

1. Sizzle the sausage dog
2. Tikka Misala the Bengal cat
3. Pirate the one eyed kitten
4. Sergeant Pugsley the pug
5. Tin Tin the Chihuahua

## Winter Woes for Joints

By Dr Toni Nguyen

Everyone knows that the cold worsens degenerative joint disease (commonly referred to as arthritis). Even though it is considered a disease of the elderly, arthritis can set in at a young age if an animal has had some bone trauma or other diseases like hip dysplasia or luxating patella.

Radiographs help vets assess how badly the joint is affected. Some of the signs can be subtle. It may start as just taking a bit longer to get up in the morning or being less willing to chase the ball.

Arthritis is a progressive disease and as animals get older it can be very painful and the changes in the joints are irreversible. Cartilage provides a cushion like effect within the joint. Without it the bones within the joint begin to grind against each other, causing bony spurs and bone weakening.



**Above xray - a normal hip joint.**



**Above xray. An arthritic hip joint, Note the irregular joint surface.**

Pain relief is key in the management of this disease and may need to be given continuously if the damage is severe.

An injection is also available which helps build back the cartilage that has been worn away as well as reduce inflammation in the joints. This is a great thing to start just before Winter for those animals with long-standing conditions.



Cold winter weather worsens arthritis.

Daily oral supplements and foods such as Hill's J/D contain glucosamine and chondroitin are a safe and an easy way of rebuilding joint cartilage in the long term. There is even a liver treat formulation so there are no excuses in not helping your painful pooch this Winter time.

**Short term goals:**

Pain relief

Reduce inflammation

**Long term goals**

Rebuild joint cartilage

Slow down disease progression

Long term comfort

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