**Prolotherapy for Tendon and Ligament Injuries in Animals**

Cruciate ligament tears, luxating patellas, and other tendon and ligament injuries can be very painful and debilitating. Typical therapy consists of surgical options, anti-inflammatory medications, and physical therapy. There are also alternative, complementary, or holistic remedies such as acupuncture, herbs, and prolotherapy.

Prolotherapy is the use of mild injections into the insertion points of the tendons or ligaments where they attach to bone. Solutions used usually contain lidocaine (a numbing and pain-relieving agent), sterile water, and a special type of sugar. The combination causes proliferation of the connective tissue—not quite scar tissue—that helps to stabilize the injured, shaky joints.

Many animals with a good temperament can have this procedure done without any sedation. Reactive animals usually request mild sedation. Generally, a series of 3-6 of the procedures are done, 1-3 weeks apart. Many animals walk out after this procedure putting much more weight on the affected leg than they did when they walked into the appointment. Recovery time is minimal except for common sense moderation of exercise immediately following the session.

Compare this with 3-6 months of extremely restricted rest and physical therapy following a Tibial Plateau Leveling Osteotomy (TPLO), which is considered the standard veterinary medicine treatment of choice for cruciate ligament tears. This procedure cuts through the tibia bone completely, to slightly rotate the bone and create a more stable platform for the joints. The created fracture is held together with a metal plate and screws.

The old hardware was once prone to inducing bone tumors, but the new and improved hardware is considered safer. However, any time bone is cut though, there is a lot of pain. This is considered the best procedure, especially for very athletic dogs, but prolotherapy, herbs, and acupuncture are viable alternative options for treatment.