



TPLO Surgery at MVO

Understanding Joint Inspection: Open Arthrotomy vs Closed Arthroscopy

Your dog has been diagnosed with a **cruciate ligament rupture** and is scheduled for **TPLO (Tibial Plateau Leveling Osteotomy)** surgery.

TPLO surgery stabilises the knee by **cutting and rotating the top of the shin bone (tibia)** to prevent the shin from sliding forward during weight-bearing.

However, many dogs with a cruciate tear have **additional damage inside the joint**, especially to the **medial meniscus**, an important piece of cartilage that cushions the knee.

Why Is Meniscal Assessment Important?

Around **50% of dogs with a complete cruciate rupture** have a **medial meniscus tear at the time of surgery**.

If a damaged meniscus is not identified and treated, it can cause:

- Persistent lameness
- Pain
- Clicking or catching sensations in the knee
- Need for further surgery in the future

Because of this, an inspection of the joint is strongly recommended.

To assess the meniscus and remove any damaged tissue (**meniscectomy**) if needed, we offer two approaches:

1. Open Arthrotomy (Open Joint Surgery)

What It Is

An incision is made directly into the joint to allow the surgeon to view and feel the meniscus.

Advantages

- Good access and visibility
- Allows meniscal tears to be treated during the same procedure
- Shorter operating time in some dogs

Disadvantages

- **Higher complication rate** compared with arthroscopy
- Larger incision into the joint
- More soft tissue disruption

- More post-operative inflammation
- Slightly longer time to return to comfort

Why Some Clinics Use This by Default

Open arthrotomy is widely taught and requires no specialised camera equipment, so most surgeons are trained in this approach.

2. Closed Arthroscopy (Keyhole Surgery)

What It Is

A tiny camera (arthroscope) is inserted through small keyhole incisions to inspect the meniscus and perform treatment if required.

Advantages

- **Smaller incisions**
- **Lower complication rate** than open arthrotomy
- Less soft-tissue disruption
- Excellent magnified view of the meniscus and cartilage
- Reduced swelling and more comfortable early recovery

Disadvantages

- Requires specialist equipment
- Requires advanced training and significant experience
- Not widely available in all practices

Why Arthroscopy Is Not Standard Everywhere

Keyhole surgery involves equipment costs that are extremely high, and the surgical skill required is significant — **most specialist orthopaedic surgeons are not trained in knee arthroscopy**.

Important Information About TPLO Pricing at MVO

Many clients assume that joint inspection (whether open or arthroscopic) is included in their TPLO package.

This is NOT included in our standard discounted TPLO bundle.

Our TPLO bundle includes:

- Initial surgical consultation
- General anaesthesia
- TPLO surgical procedure
- Immediate post-operative X-rays
- Medications required on the day of surgery

Not included in the base package:

- Open arthrotomy joint inspection
- Arthroscopic (keyhole) joint inspection

- Meniscal assessment and meniscectomy
- Additional equipment or surgical time required for joint surgery

Clients may **choose** to have the meniscus assessed and treated using:

- **Open arthrotomy**, or
- **Closed arthroscopy (keyhole)**

These procedures are priced separately and can be added to your TPLO plan.

Which Option Should You Choose?

The best method depends on:

- Your dog's size (our surgeon believes keyhole is advisable in all dogs but especially large and giant breed dogs)
- Your dog's activity level
- Your preference regarding incision size and recovery
- Very few knee arthroscopes end up with an infection
- Whether you want the option with the **lowest complication rate** (arthroscopy)
- Whether you prefer a **cheaper option** (open arthrotomy)

Our team will discuss the options with you and help you make the choice that suits your dog, your expectations, and your budget.

Key Takeaway

TPLO stabilises the knee, but **meniscal assessment is separate** and highly recommended due to the high rate of cartilage injury.

You may choose either **open arthrotomy** or **closed arthroscopy**, and our surgeons will support you in selecting the most appropriate option for your dog.