



Luxating Patellas, Bite Alignment, Heart Murmurs

Luxating Patellas (Kneecaps That Slip)?

A luxating patella happens when the kneecap slips out of its normal groove, often in small breeds but possible in any dog.

Grades:

- Grade 1 – Kneecap slips easily but goes back on its own
- Grade 2 – Slips out more often, may cause skipping or 'hopping' gait
- Grade 3 – Usually sits out of place, can be moved back manually
- Grade 4 – Permanently out of place, causes bowed legs

Signs:

- Bunny-hopping or skipping when running
- Occasional limping that improves quickly
- Reluctance to jump or climb
- Bowed rear legs in severe

Treatment / Management:

- Mild cases: often managed with weight control, joint supplements, physical therapy, and avoiding high-impact play
- Moderate-severe cases: may require surgical correction to realign the kneecap
- Puppies with mild grades often live normal, happy lives with no surgery

Dog Breeds Prone To Luxating Patellas

Toy Poodles, Pomeranians, Yorkshire Terriers, Chihuahuas, Maltese, and other small/toy breeds are at higher risk. Large breeds can also be affected, though less commonly.

Bite Alignment (Overbites & Underbites)

The way your puppy's upper and lower jaws line up. Bite issues are often breed-specific.

Overbite (Parrot Mouth): Upper jaw extends past the lower jaw. Breeds prone: Collies, Shelties, Dachshunds, Retrievers, Yorkies, Chihuahuas.

Underbite (Reverse Scissor / Bulldog Bite): Lower jaw extends beyond the upper jaw. Normal in Bulldogs, Shih Tzus, Boxers, Pekingese, Lhasa Apsos. In other breeds, considered a fault and may affect chewing or dental health.

Note: Puppies' jaws can shift as they grow. Vets usually monitor until 6–8 months before deciding if intervention is needed.

Heart Murmurs

A heart murmur is an extra or unusual sound heard during a heartbeat, often described as a 'whooshing' noise.

In Puppies:

- Many murmurs are 'innocent' or 'physiologic' and disappear as the puppy grows
- Often detected at routine vet exams around 6–8 weeks

Grades:

Murmurs are ranked 1–6, with 1 being very faint and 6 being loud/severe.

Possible Causes:

- Innocent murmurs
- Congenital heart defects
- Valve issues

When to Worry:

- If the murmur is loud (Grade 3 or higher)
- If it does not resolve by 12–16 weeks of age
- If the puppy shows symptoms such as coughing, tiring easily, rapid breathing, fainting, or poor weight gain
- If paired with abnormal heart rhythm or other clinical signs

What Families Should Know:

- Most mild murmurs in young puppies resolve on their own
- Vets may recommend re-checks as puppies grow
- Severe or persistent murmurs may require echocardiograms, monitoring, or treatment by a cardiology specialist

Key Takeaways for Puppy Families

- Many puppies with luxating patellas, bite variations, or heart murmurs live completely normal, healthy lives
- Breed and growth stage matter — what's a concern in one puppy may be normal in another
- Always share concerns at vet visits and follow monitoring recommendations
- Ethical breeding programs (like Amega Star Pup Academy's focus on structure, genetics, and health) work to reduce the risk of these conditions



At Amega Star Pup Academy, we believe knowledge is power – the more you understand about your puppy's health, the better start you can give them.