

ASK OUR VETERINARIANS



Brachycephalic health concerns

Brachy-WHAT?!? Brachycephalic dog breeds are becoming increasingly popular. These dogs include: boxers, bulldogs, pugs, shih tzus, boston terriers, and any other breed with a “smushy” face. In addition to the typical health concerns of any dog, these breeds come with their own unique problems. The most serious of these distinct issues concerns breathing. These dogs often have small tracheas (airways), excessive tissue in the back of the throat, and small nostrils. This combination of traits can lead to some very serious breathing problems. In dogs that are severely affected, surgery can be performed to remove the excessive throat tissue and enlarge the nostrils. These procedures can greatly improve the quality of life for a brachycephalic dog. Because of these breathing issues, they are very intolerant of the heat and stressful situations. Panting is the number one way dogs cool themselves and in these dogs, panting is common, but does not cool them as effectively as other breeds. Heat stroke is very common and these dogs should only be allowed outside during the cooler hours of the day or for only short periods during the hottest hours of the day. Other issues specific to these breeds would include: joint problems, difficulty giving birth naturally, and skin/skin fold infections. So if you are considering adopting or purchasing one of these breeds, make sure you are well informed of the health concerns. If you have questions, please contact your veterinarian.

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