

## Brachycephalic dog breeds



## A transdisciplinary approach

The RVC is a leading specialist clinic for brachycephalic dog breeds. If a dog was brought to a veterinary clinic with this complex set of clinical signs, it may have to see several different specialists at different times.

At the RVC we take a transdisciplinary approach to caring for brachycephalic dogs. This means bringing all clinical services together to ensure the dogs get the best holistic and individualised patient care.

For more information, please ask our team.

# Brachycephalic dog breeds

Brachycephalic dog breeds, short-muzzled or short-nosed dogs, can suffer from long-term health problems that affect their breathing, eyes, bones and gait, heart, skin and ears.

Brachycephalic dogs have compressed skulls, which results in the bones of the face being too small and the soft tissues, such as the tongue and soft palate being too large for the space they occupy. This means the animals are at especially high risk of developing breathing problems such as brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome (BOAS). The clinical signs include breathing difficulties, noises during respiration, over-heating, gagging and choking.

The flattening of the skull also causes the eye sockets to become shallow, meaning the eyeball protrudes significantly. Therefore, the cornea is more exposed than usual, making it more likely to become dry, leading to ulceration or direct trauma.

Other health issues can include heart problems, ear and hearing issues and complications with the dog's bones and gait.

Moreover, general anaesthesia or sedation involves a significantly increased risk for these specific breeds. After these procedures, brachycephalic dogs can develop gastro-intestinal signs (i.e. regurgitation and vomiting), corneal ulcerations or breathing problems. A life-threatening complication after an anaesthetic includes aspiration pneumonia.

If your dog is undergoing an anaesthetic, please be assured that our veterinary team is very aware of the risks associated with these breeds and multiple precautions are taken to reduce the risk of these complications, as well as to treat them if they develop.

## When you visit us.

When you visit us for an appointment you will be asked to be available for 90 minutes after your consultation if your pet is to be admitted, this is to ensure they settle in to their accommodation and do not experience any worsening of their symptoms such as breathing difficulties or overheating.

If we are concerned for their health and a procedure cannot be performed that day you may be asked to return the next day at 8 am so your pet can undergo their procedure first thing in the morning. This is to reduce the stress of being hospitalised.

You may be advised that your pet requires an airway examination whilst under general anaesthetic even if breathing issues was not their primary problem.

## Time to go home

Once your pet is ready to go home you will be given instructions for aftercare as well as any signs to look out for related to your pets brachycephalic symptoms, verbally and as a written document.

**If you are concerned about your dogs breathing (e.g. increased breathing rate, noise and coughing), please contact our emergency department ASAP.**

You also have the right to return directly to the hospital at any time if you are concerned and one of our emergency department will see you.

**Queen Mother Hospital for Animals  
01707 666399**

<http://www.rvc.ac.uk/small-animal-referrals>