

The cost of cuteness

Protecting the health of your flat-faced pet



Pets with very short noses and squished faces are known as brachycephalic (literally “short-headed”) breeds. Breeding for these unnaturally short skulls makes your pet more vulnerable to serious medical issues, including brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome.

Remember BREATHE for signs of BOAS and other common medical issues in flat-faced breeds, and consult your veterinarian if you notice any of these problems:

- B** **Breathing** difficulties, such as snorting, snoring, coughing, excessive panting or shortness of breath.
- R** **Regurgitating** (vomiting) food immediately after eating, gagging or other signs of gastrointestinal problems.
- E** **Eyes** that are red, squinting or chronically discharging fluid.
- A** **Apnea** (sudden stops in breathing); dogs who suffer from apnea may regularly sleep with their mouth open or head propped up.
- T** **Tight** nostrils or other visible restrictions to airways while at rest.
- H** **Heat** intolerance or overheating easily.
- E** **Exercise** intolerance, including excessive panting or collapsing after light exercise.

What else can you do to protect your pet's health?



- Regularly and gently clean and dry the areas between your pet's facial skin folds.
- Monitor your pet's weight; just a few extra pounds can worsen health issues.
- Watch for weakness in the hind legs, which could indicate joint or back issues.
- Avoid air travel and long walks in hot or humid weather.
- Pay attention to your pet's teeth; crowded teeth are prone to dental disease.

Learn more at humaneVMA.org/brachycephalic

Rachel Stern/Humane World for Animals