

Do English bulldogs and other short-snouted dogs need special care in the summer heat?

June 29 2016

English bulldogs are brachycephalic dogs, which means that they have been bred over the past 200 years or so to have a very short nose. Other brachycephalic dogs include pugs, French bulldogs, boxers, Boston terriers, Cavalier King Charles spaniels, Shih Tzus, Lhasa apsos and their crossbreeds.

They are very popular pets because of their personable natures and adorably snub faces. However, their short snouts make brachycephalic [breeds](#) prone to a multitude of health problems, particularly breathing problems that can become more complicated in the heat.

Dogs pant to cool themselves, but brachycephalic dogs are unable to effectively lower their temperature this way, and can become overheated very easily. Owners of these breeds need to take additional precautions in hot weather, because their pets are at high risk for heat stroke or heat stress.

All short-faced [dogs](#) should be kept inside on very hot days, and air conditioning is mandatory if you have a bulldog. Obesity magnifies the risk of hot days; it can be hard to keep a bulldog thin, but doing so will improve airway function and help keep your pet more comfortable.

Don't expect your bulldog to enjoy picnics where there aren't shady, cool places to rest. And remember: bulldogs are not gifted swimmers—yours may not be able to swim at all. Brachycephalic breeds should wear a life preserver around water and should not be left alone near pools or lakes;

they could drown.

Provided by Tufts University

Citation: Do English bulldogs and other short-snouted dogs need special care in the summer heat? (2016, June 29) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-06-english-bulldogs-short-snouted-dogs-special.html>

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