

# 'Noisy breathing in flat-faced (brachycephalic) dogs at rest or light exercise is never normal'

Dogs with an abnormally flattened face are described as brachycephalic. Many serious health conditions such as breathing difficulties in dogs have been linked to being flat-faced but these issues are often normalised as somehow acceptable in these dogs because of their breed.

The position of the **UK Brachycephalic Working Group** is that flat-faced dogs that show noisy breathing (awake-snoring or raspy breathing) at rest or light exercise **are suffering** from severe respiratory problems and should **NEVER BE CONSIDERED AS NORMAL or HEALTHY**

## What is BOAS?

Brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome describes the severe respiratory problems linked to being flat-faced where affected dogs struggle to breathe, exercise, sleep or enjoy a good quality of life

brachycephalic face shape

normal face shape



**Anyone wishing to avoid acquiring a sick dog are:**

Encouraged to **never to acquire a brachycephalic (flat-faced dog) with noisy breathing.**

Key flat-faced breeds that commonly suffer from BOAS include **French Bulldogs** (~50% affected), **Pugs** (~60% affected) and **English Bulldogs** (~40% affected)

The BWG advice to the general public is to **'Stop and think before buying a flat-faced dog'**.

**Persons who already own a flat-faced (brachycephalic) dog should be aware that:**

**Flat-faced dogs with noisy breathing at rest or light exercise are suffering. Never accept noisy or laboured breathing at rest or light exercise as normal or healthy.**

**Breathing problems in flat-faced dogs generally worsen with age.**

**Always keep your flat-faced dog slim.**

**Arrange regular veterinary health examinations of your dog. Ask your vet about using the Respiratory Function Grading Scheme to assess your dog for breathing problems.**

**Avoid over-exercising flat-faced dogs with breathing problems. To reduce the risk of heatstroke, keep your dog cool on warm/hot days and remember that Dogs Die on Hot Walks.**

**For anyone concerned about noisy breathing in their dog:**

The Kennel Club and University of Cambridge 'Respiratory Function Grading Scheme' (RFGS) offers a non-invasive assessment tool enabling veterinary surgeons to assess the adequacy of respiratory function in English Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and Pugs and to detect BOAS.



**Take-home message: Flat-faced dogs with noisy breathing at rest or light exercise are suffering and should never be described as healthy dogs if promoted, bred from, sold, shown or rehomed.**