

WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT TRANSPORTING BRACHYCEPHALIC ANIMALS?



What is a brachycephalic animal?

Any animal that has been bred with a deliberately shortened nose is defined as brachycephalic. Well recognized dog breeds include the Bulldog, Boston terrier, Pug, Pekinese and many others. And in cats may include the Himalayan, Persian, and many others.



So how does shortening the nose affect these animal?

There are several important “knock-on” effects from breeding animals with a shortened nose, they have;

1. A short nose and narrow airways
2. Prominent laryngeal and pharyngeal mucosal folds
3. Long / extended soft palate
4. Narrow opening to the larynx
5. A hypoplastic trachea (especially bulldogs)
6. And, in some breeds, pulmonary hypertension

Brachycephalic: “Short Nose”

Short nose, narrow airway
Prominent pharyngeal and laryngeal mucosa
Elongated soft pallet
Hypoplastic [narrow] trachea



Signs:
Snoring, wheezing
Restricted airway
Exercise Intolerance
Syncope [Fainting]
Poor Body Temperature regulation



What do we see with these dogs, and to a little lesser extent, cats?

- They snore, snort, and snuffle
- They often dribble
- They are more prone to upper airway infections
- Some are very exercise intolerant
- There is evidence that these pets have sleeping disorders that result from sleep apnea
- And some, will suffer from syncope or fainting

Some brachycephalic breeds e.g. Boston Terrier also prone to Pulmonary Hypertension. Chronic obstructive airway disease of the LOWER airway e.g. allergic bronchitis may lead to Pulmonary Hypertension. All of which worsens the condition

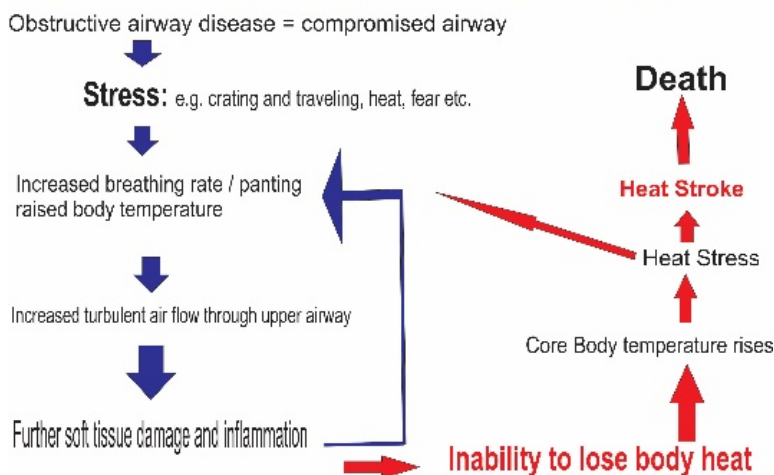
How does this affect them when they travel and why do many airlines now have restrictions on transporting them?

Sitting quietly at home and breathing normally at rest there may seem to be no apparent problem. But if the pet goes into a deep sleep or wakes up and runs around for a bit we notice that they tend to make more respiratory sounds like snoring, “snorking”, snuffling etc. These “upper airway sounds originate from turbulent airflow – i.e. vibrations. And it’s the mucous membranes that are vibrating. Vibrations will always irritate the mucous

membranes in these animals and there will be some inflammation of these membranes, this is not good. This in turns leads to what we know as OBSTRUCTIVE AIRWAY DISEASE. All brachycephalic animal will have some form of obstructive airway disease. Add to this other problems like a collapsing larynx, everted laryngeal sacculles, Obstructive lower airway disease (Core pulmonale), obesity and you have a biological time bomb.

Dogs and cats loose heat from their bodies via the respiratory system, when they are hot they pant. If they cannot effectively pant and lose heat they will get heat stroke and die.

A VICIOUS CYCLE: The effect of stress on brachycephalics



That is why airlines have such strict guidelines for transporting these breeds and that is why you must follow you agents advice even if it means waiting until the cool months to transport your beloved pet – *it is for their own good.*