

the healthy French Bulldog

A GUIDE

More Than a Pretty Face

Committed to Healthy
Brachycephalic Breeds





The French Bulldog Club of NSW



about us

Our Mission

At the French Bulldog Club of NSW, we're more than just a community of Frenchie lovers; we're a family dedicated to the health, welfare, and joy of brachycephalic breeds. Our mission is to ensure that every snub-nosed friend in NSW, and by extension Australia, is cared for, loved, and celebrated.

Our Values

- **Compassion:** Every Frenchie deserves love, and we're here to provide it.
- **Integrity:** We stand by ethical breeding practices and transparent operations.
- **Community:** Together, we create a network of support, knowledge, and friendship.

Our Programs

- **Health Schemes:** From spine and hip screenings to DNA testing, we're committed to the physical well-being of our beloved Frenchies.
- **Rescue & Rehome:** Life's curveballs shouldn't mean a Frenchie loses its home. We provide non-judgmental support to find new loving homes.
- **Education & Awareness:** We offer resources, workshops, and events to educate breeders, owners, and the public about responsible breeding and care.

Join us

Whether you're a breeder, owner, or simply a fan of French Bulldogs, we welcome you to join our club. Enjoy member benefits, participate in events, and be part of a movement that puts "Healthy Snouts, Happy Hearts" at the forefront.



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Healthy Snouts, Happy Hearts:

Our Focus on French Bulldog Wellness

The health of a puppy begins with its Parents

We've crafted this booklet to illuminate the path to health and happiness for French Bulldogs, a beloved brachycephalic breed. By uniting breeders, veterinarians, and enthusiasts, we delve into the essentials of choosing a responsible breeder, understanding the health tests they conduct, and deciphering what these tests signify.



The Club's unwavering focus is on the welfare of each French Bulldog, laying the groundwork for a life filled with health, joy, and freedom from pain. While genetics may be a lottery for all living beings, including us humans, we believe that the key to giving our Frenchies the best start lies in leveraging cutting-edge scientific knowledge to shape our health schemes. Welcome to a world where healthy snouts are the gateway to happy hearts.

Overview of the Club's Health Schemes

Spine and Hip Scheme

In the French Bulldog we pay specific attention to two significant structural bone problems that may affect the breed – hemivertebrae and hip dysplasia.



Respiratory Function Grading

The Respiratory Function Grading (RFG) Health Scheme screens for BOAS which is a complex respiratory condition that affects dogs with shortened snouts and can impair a dog's ability to exercise, play, eat, and sleep.

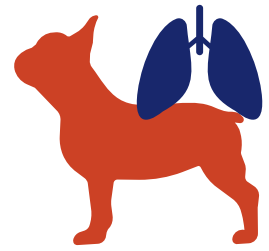


Latest DNA Research

The beauty of using the latest DNA research is that it allows us to identify inherited diseases, understand how to breed them out of the gene pool (or at least breed unaffected carriers without losing valuable genetic diversity. Acute genetic diseases can now be all but completely avoided.



Respiratory Function Grading



Understanding BOAS and the Respiratory Function Grading (RFG) Scheme

Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (BOAS) is a prevalent health concern in brachycephalic breeds, including French Bulldogs. These breeds are characterised by a shortened skull and muzzle, leading to respiratory challenges. The Respiratory Function Grading Scheme aims to address these challenges through a comprehensive approach:



What is BOAS?

BOAS is a complex disorder affecting the upper respiratory tract of brachycephalic dogs. It can lead to severe breathing difficulties, impacting the dog's ability to exercise, sleep, play, and even breathe normally.



The Importance of Health Screening

Early detection and proper grading of BOAS are vital for the well-being of brachycephalic dogs. The Respiratory Function Grading Scheme provides a standardised method to assess and grade the severity of BOAS, guiding both treatment and breeding decisions.



Responsible Breeding Practices

The scheme emphasises responsible breeding, encouraging breeders to select dogs with healthy respiratory function. By adhering to the grading guidelines, breeders can work towards reducing the incidence of BOAS in future generations.



Education and Awareness

Prospective owners and breeders must be fully informed about the health implications of BOAS. Understanding the potential costs, surgical interventions, and lifelong care associated with managing BOAS is essential for responsible ownership.



What is the BOAS Test?

Assessment: The test assesses Bulldogs, French Bulldogs, and Pugs for BOAS and advises owners if their dog is affected. The grade indicates the severity BOAS and will assist in making decisions about managing the problem - which may include surgery. The grades are as follows:

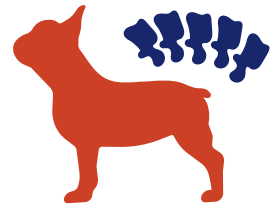
- **Grade 0:** Clinically unaffected, free of respiratory signs.
- **Grade 1:** Mild respiratory signs linked to BOAS.
- **Grade 2:** Moderate respiratory signs of BOAS.
- **Grade 3:** Severe respiratory signs of BOAS.

Reassessment: Dogs can be assessed from 12 months of age and should be repeated every two years.

The Respiratory Function Grading Scheme is a critical tool in the fight against BOAS, a condition that significantly impacts the quality of life for brachycephalic breeds. By focusing on early detection, responsible breeding, education, and adherence to legal standards, the scheme provides a pathway towards healthier, happier lives for these unique and beloved dogs.

Whether you're a breeder, a prospective owner, or a French Bulldog enthusiast, understanding BOAS and the Respiratory Function Grading Scheme is essential. Together, we can stand up for the health and well-being of our snub-nosed companions, ensuring that every French Bulldog enjoys a life filled with wagging tails and healthy snouts.

Spine & Hip Scheme



The Spine and Hip Scheme: A Commitment to Healthy French Bulldogs

French Bulldogs, with their cheerful and affectionate nature, have become one of Australia's most loved breeds. However, they may face two significant structural bone problems – hemivertebrae and hip dysplasia. The French Bulldog Club of NSW has implemented the Spine and Hip Scheme to address these issues and ensure the well-being of this beloved breed.



Hemivertebrae

Hemivertebrae are vertebrae that have not developed properly, resulting in misshapen bones that can cause instability in the vertebral column (the back). This instability can lead to pinching of the spinal cord and disc protrusion. French Bulldogs have a high incidence of hemivertebrae, with the average Frenchie having a minimum of three.

The scoring for assessing hemivertebrae is as follows:

- Grade 1: Partially wedged vertebra, score 1
- Grade 2: Fully wedged vertebra, score 2
- Grade 3: Double wedged (butterfly) vertebra, score 3

With a current breed median of 14, it is strongly recommended not to breed with backs scoring higher than 15, especially if there are other issues such as high hip scores or respiratory function grades.



Hip Dysplasia

Hip dysplasia is another concern in the breed, often characterised by shallow sockets and loose ligaments. The breed average is lowering slightly over time, with the current median result at 15. Dogs with hip scores over 20 should be bred with caution, considering other factors like low back scores and good respiratory function results.

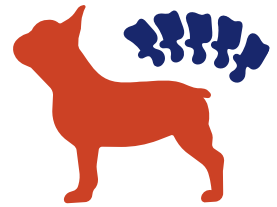


Grading and Assessment

Dogs are x-rayed after they are 12 months of age by a Veterinarian who confirms the dog's identity via its microchip. The two schemes should be considered simultaneously, and significant problems in both areas would strongly suggest not breeding with the animal. The x-rays are then submitted to be independant assessed by a certified specialist radiologist who can grade the x-rays and provide a score.

The Spine and Hip Scheme, along with the Respiratory Grading Function Scheme, reflects the French Bulldog Club of NSW's commitment to the health and welfare of French Bulldogs. By adhering to these guidelines, breeders, veterinarians, and enthusiasts can work together to ensure that Frenchie's lead healthy, pain-free, and long lives. The club's efforts align with the broader goal of responsible breeding and the preservation of the breed's integrity, focusing on a world where healthy snouts lead to happy hearts.

Spine & Hip Scheme



Understanding Test Results

The Spine and Hip Scheme is a vital tool for assessing the structural health of French Bulldogs. When considering a puppy, it's essential to understand the test results of the parents, as these can provide insights into potential health issues. Here's what to look for:

Hemivertebrae Scoring

- **Lower Scores Are Better:** The scoring for hemivertebrae ranges from Grade 1 to Grade 3, with lower scores indicating healthier vertebrae. A lower total score is preferable, as it suggests fewer or less severe deformities.
- **Avoid Corresponding Problems:** If both parents have hemivertebrae problems in the same corresponding region, it may increase the risk for the offspring. Look for parents without matching problem areas.
- **Breed Median Consideration:** The current breed median is 14, and the club recommends not to breed with parents with a back scoring higher than 15. Be sure to check both parent's results to confirm their scores conform.

Hip Dysplasia Scoring

- **Lower Scores Indicate Healthier Hips:** Hip dysplasia scores reflect the condition of the hip joints, with lower scores indicating healthier hips. Look for parents with scores below the breed median of 15.
- **Consider Corresponding Regions:** Similar to hemivertebrae, if both parents have hip dysplasia in the same corresponding region, it may increase the risk for the offspring. Seek parents without matching problem areas.
- **Breed Median Consideration:** While there is no recommendation about hip scores, scores over 20 should only be used when other factors such as low back scores and good respiratory function results are exceptional.

Overall Considerations

- **Balanced Approach:** Look for a balanced combination of spine and hip scores. If one parent has a higher score in one area, consider pairing with a mate that has a lower corresponding score.
- **Consult with Experts:** If in doubt, consult with veterinarians or breeders who are experienced in interpreting these scores. They can provide valuable insights into the potential health of the offspring.
- **Consider the Whole Picture:** While these scores are essential, they are part of a broader picture of health. Consider other factors such as temperament, overall health, and compatibility with your lifestyle.

The Spine and Hip Scheme provides valuable insights into the structural health of French Bulldogs. By understanding what to look for in the test results, prospective owners can make informed decisions that contribute to the well-being of their future furry family member. The French Bulldog Club of NSW is committed to supporting responsible breeding practices, ensuring that every Frenchie has the opportunity for a healthy, joyful life.

Using DNA in Breeding



A Sensible Approach to French Bulldog Health

The French Bulldog Club of NSW emphasises the importance of DNA testing in breeding to ensure the health and well-being of French Bulldogs. DNA tests provide valuable insights into specific diseases, allowing breeders to make informed decisions. Here's a comprehensive look at how DNA is used in breeding:



Understanding DNA Tests

French Bulldog Clubs consider DNA tests specific to the breed, focusing on the numbers affected, the severity of the disease, and the impact on the animal's health. Unlike common misconceptions, affected dogs can still be used in breeding, thanks to DNA tests. The main goal is not to lose any valuable breeding stock unnecessarily. Bundled tests are widely available and cheap. They test all known diseases in any breed, including parentage. It's often more cost-effective to test this way than for individual diseases.



Simple Recessive DNA Diseases

Over 90% of DNA tests deal with simple recessive diseases. Understanding how these diseases are inherited and using this information sensibly is crucial. Here's a guide to possible matings:

- Normal/clear dogs: 'AA'
- Carriers (heterozygous): 'Aa'
- Affected dogs: 'aa'
- Matings in red are not advised and should not occur.
- Matings in pink are high risk but may be required occasionally. All progeny should be DNA tested before sale.



Significant DNA Disease Tests

1. **HC (Hereditary Cataract) HSF4 Gene:** This early-onset cataract disease affects both eyes within the first 2-3 years of life and is progressive. Cataracts can be removed surgically, but testing helps sort out affected, carrier, and normal dogs.
2. **DM (Degenerative Myelopathy):** Though widespread in the canine population, there are no confirmed cases of DM in French Bulldogs. Testing for DM is not recommended for this breed.
3. **Colour Dilution Tests:** Tests for colour dilution, mainly for blue, are available but less frequently used, as it's not considered a major issue.

A Future with Healthy Frenchie

The use of DNA in breeding is a powerful tool in the hands of responsible breeders. By understanding the genetic makeup of French Bulldogs, breeders can make informed decisions that contribute to the health and longevity of this cherished breed. The French Bulldog Club of NSW continues to advocate for sensible breeding practices, ensuring that every Frenchie has the opportunity for a healthy, joyful life. Welcome to a world where science and love come together for the benefit of our four-legged friends.

A Healthy Start for Your Furry Friend Starts With You...

Welcoming a French Bulldog into your home is a joyous occasion filled with wagging tails, loving snorts, and a lifetime of companionship. But before you fall in love with those irresistible eyes and snub nose, there's something vital to consider: the health of your future furry friend.



Why Health Testing Matters

Health testing isn't just a formality; it's a commitment to ensuring that your French Bulldog starts life on the right paw. Brachycephalic breeds like Frenchie have unique health considerations, and responsible breeding practices are key to a happy, healthy life.

- **Prevention:** Early detection of potential health issues like hip dysplasia or BOAS can lead to better management and even prevention.
- **Longevity:** Health-tested puppies are more likely to enjoy a longer, more comfortable life without the burden of preventable diseases.
- **Peace of Mind:** Knowing that your puppy has been health-tested provides assurance that you're bringing home a pet that's been cared for with the highest standards.

Considerations Before Buying a Puppy

Choosing to buy a French Bulldog puppy is a significant decision that requires careful thought and planning. Here's what you need to consider:

- **Research the Breeder:** Look for breeders who adhere to ethical practices, including comprehensive health testing. Ask for health clearances and meet the puppy's parents if possible.
- **Understand the Costs:** Owning a French Bulldog involves not only the purchase price but also ongoing care, including potential health-related expenses.
- **Assess Your Lifestyle:** Frenchie are loving and require attention, exercise, and care. Ensure that your lifestyle aligns with the needs of this wonderful breed.
- **Join a Community:** Consider joining clubs like the French Bulldog Club of NSW, where you can access resources, support, and a network of fellow Frenchie enthusiasts.

A Journey of Love and Responsibility

Owning a French Bulldog is a delightful journey filled with love, laughter, and sometimes a few snorts. By prioritising health testing and making informed decisions, you're not just buying a puppy; you're investing in a healthy, happy member of your family.

As you explore this booklet, you'll discover the various health schemes, programs, and initiatives that the French Bulldog Club of NSW offers to support you and your Frenchie. Together, we stand for "Healthy Snouts, Happy Hearts."

Welcome to the world of French Bulldogs!