

Brachycephalic Consent Form

Anesthesia, Sedation and Hospitalization

Brachycephalic is a term for “short-nosed.” Several dog breeds may experience difficulty breathing due to the shape of their head, muzzle and throat. Shorter nosed dogs include English Bulldogs, French Bulldogs, Pugs, Boston Terriers and many other breeds. The shorter than average nose and face in proportion to their body size can cause problems for these breeds at times.

Owners with brachycephalic breeds must pay extra attention to their animals during exercise, heat and while obtaining veterinary care.

Overview

The purpose of this form is to inform you of the risks associated with anesthesia/sedation and occasionally hospitalization, which are inherent for dogs with shorter noses (brachycephalic). Not all of these problems may apply to your dog, but these are part of the brachycephalic syndrome. Please discuss any specific concerns with your attending veterinarian.

Respiratory problems

Brachycephalic dogs have a shortened skull, resulting in a compressed nasal passage and abnormal throat anatomy. The abnormal upper airway anatomy causes increased negative pressure while taking a breath, leading to inflammation, deformation of throat tissues, and obstruction of breathing. We encourage corrective surgery in moderate to severely affected dogs.

Cooling problems

As dogs cool by panting, dogs with narrowed airways may have difficulty cooling themselves. This may be made worse by anxiety or stress.

Stomach and intestinal problems

Brachycephalic dogs may swallow a lot of air which can lead to increased vomiting or regurgitation, and this could lead to pneumonia. If possible, we pre-treat brachycephalic dogs with medications to reduce stomach acids, and to promote stomach emptying.

Restraint challenges

Due to their airway, and in some bulldogs, their intrinsic personality as “tough” dogs, it may be difficult to restrain them safely. This is a particularly significant problem with more aggressive dogs. We occasionally need to sedate them, or ask family members to help with some routine procedures to avoid unnecessary stress on the patient.

Sedation and anesthesia

While sedation and anesthesia are commonly performed in brachycephalic breeds, especially bulldogs, recovery from anesthesia may be more difficult for these patients due to a narrowed airway. We have our anesthesia team very closely involved in sedation and anesthesia of brachycephalic breeds especially bulldogs. They have found that careful monitoring is essential to a good outcome. In fact, many dog owners travel some distance in order to ensure that a Tufts board-certified anesthesiologist is present during anesthesia or sedation to minimize the risk of complications.

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We consider brachycephalic dogs a high risk population. Please be sure you talk with your doctor about the following:

1. Any medical and/or surgical treatment alternatives for your pet
2. Sufficient details of this consent form and how they apply to your dog
3. How fully your pet might respond or recover and how long it could take
4. The most common complications and how serious they might be

I grant permission for my pet to undergo general anesthesia/sedation/hospitalization at the Foster Hospital for Small Animals at Cummings Veterinary Medical Center. I am aware that my pet has physical characteristics that make anesthesia and sedation more challenging and possibly more risky than for the average dog with a longer nose.

I am aware that brachycephalic breeds, such as the English and French bulldog, Boston Terrier, Pug, and Pekingese have a shortened skull, resulting in a compressed nasal passage and abnormal throat anatomy. The abnormal upper airway anatomy causes increased negative pressure while taking a breath, leading to inflammation, deformation of throat tissues, and obstruction of breathing.

I am aware that if my brachycephalic pet undergoes sedation or general anesthesia the potential complications include partial or complete airway obstruction during recovery and regurgitation/vomiting which could lead to aspiration pneumonia/respiratory distress. With airway surgery, death has been reported as a rare complication in <3% of cases.

I am aware that anesthetizing or sedating a brachycephalic animal for any reason can lead to the development of significant complications as described in this document.

Please answer YES or NO to the following questions:

My pet has demonstrated difficult breathing, exercise intolerance, and/or collapse episodes.

YES ____ NO ____

My pet has demonstrated difficult eating, such as gagging, vomiting, and regurgitation.

YES ____ NO ____

My pet is receiving or has recently received a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (e.g., Rimadyl)

YES ____ NO ____

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the above information and give your consent for treatment.

Owner signature: _____

Date: _____

S Number

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