



# BRACHYCEPHALIC OBSTRUCTIVE AIRWAY SYNDROME (BOAS) FAQs FOR PET OWNERS

## What is an elongated soft palate?

As part of the anatomy of the oral cavity, the soft palate is the muscular back portion of the roof of the mouth. If your pet has an elongated soft palate it may partially block their throat and can cause breathing and feeding-related issues.

## What is Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome?

The term brachycephalic means "short headed". These breeds of dogs and cats have a different shape of their head, muzzle, and throat which makes them more prone to breathing problems.

## What dog and cat breeds may be affected by BOAS?

Dog breeds prone to Brachycephalic Airway Obstructive Syndrome include:

- Affenpinscher
- American Staffordshire Terrier
- American Bulldog
- Boston Terrier
- Boxer
- Brussels Griffon
- Bulldog
- Bullmastiff
- Cane Corso
- Chihuahua (apple-headed)
- Dogue de Bordeaux
- English Mastiff
- French Bulldog
- Griffon Bruxellois
- Japanese Chin
- King Charles Spaniel
- Lhasa Apso
- Neapolitan Mastiff
- Newfoundland
- Olde English Bulldogge
- Pekingese
- Pug
- Rottweiler
- Shar Pei
- Shih Tzu
- Tibetan Spaniel
- Valley Bulldog

Cat breeds prone to Brachycephalic Airway Obstructive Syndrome:

- British Shorthair
- Burmese
- Exotic Shorthair
- Himalayan cat
- Persian cat
- Scottish Fold

## **What are some signs and symptoms of an elongated soft palate?**

Some common symptoms of elongated soft palate are breathing difficulties such as snoring, stridor (high-pitched whistling sound when breathing), and snorting. Also feeding issues can occur such as gagging, retch, and food aspiration. Also, your pet may prefer to sleep on its back to help open up the throat. Depending on the severity, your pet may be unwilling to exercise and can develop a complete collapse of the airway.

## **When should can elongated soft palate be treated?**

Early detection and treatment of elongated soft palate is highly recommended. Many BOAS-related surgeries can be performed at the same time as spay or neuter procedures.

## **What is recovery like after an elongated soft palate resection?**

Recovery after VetScalpel CO<sub>2</sub> laser soft palate resection is most often uneventful and quieter breathing is noted immediately after the surgery. Your veterinarian will prescribe medications to reduce inflammation and prevent infection. Limited exercise is recommended for the first 5 days after surgery.

## **What is stenotic nares?**

Dog and cat brachycephalic breeds may have difficulty breathing through their nose. This may be due to stenotic nares, meaning narrow nostrils.



Stenotic nares in a brachycephalic dog (left) compared to the open nostrils of a mesaticephalic dog (right).

## What are some signs of stenotic nares?

Some signs of stenotic nares and BOAS for pet owners to look for include:

- Distressed breathing – panting and overworking to breathe even while at rest.
- Abnormal breathing noises – such as constant snorting or snoring sounds, awake and asleep
- Unwillingness or inability to exercise
- Overheating – an inability to control their body temperature
- Fainting – even after brief or light exercise

If your pet has any of these symptoms, please notify your veterinarian.

## Is stenotic nares surgery necessary?

Stenotic nares should be corrected to provide your pet with the best quality of life.

## What is recovery like from stenotic nares VetScalpel laser surgery?

Recovery from VetScalpel CO<sub>2</sub> laser surgery is usually fast and comfortable. Your pet will typically be discharged the same day as the surgery with immediately noticeable improved breathing.

## Stenotic nares laser surgery is best performed at what age?

Brachycephalic dog and cat breeds that have stenotic nares have it from birth. Ideally, stenotic nares correction should be performed at a young age, such as during a routine spay or neuter procedure.

