

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DIGESTIVE PROCESS IN THE FRENCH BULLDOG

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Understanding that limited digestion comes with limited airways in brachycephalic breeds!

The smaller throat and the large tongue cannot grab food efficiently and the resulting turbulence and air ingestion will affect the rest of the digestive process. The stomach, in turn, has to deal with excess air and food which delay gastric emptying and diminish gut motility. Various food ingredient absorption happens in the duodenum with the help of digestive secretions provided among others by the liver and pancreas. The colon (the last part of the bowels) is involved in resorbing water and electrolytes sorting waste and formatting the feces with the help of a complicated mixture of intestinal flora (Bacteria) and intestinal secretions. Obviously, disturbances at any level can reverberate through the entire digestive tract and wear out the digestion to the point of permanent dysfunction. Unfortunately, not uncommon in our breed. We can avoid causing more chaos in an already limited digestive function. Understanding the many things that can affect digestion is the first step.

- The physical and chemical presentation of the food matters: Dry food, moist food, cooked or uncooked.
- The basic balance of the ingredients matters such as Protein fat carbohydrate minerals vitamins mixed in a precise recommended ratio. That also means one source of protein at a time as many dogs have hypersensitivities.

If you are already using a combination, then it will be difficult to find a new source when you have a problem. Understanding also that a poor appetite has a cause and just an empirical switch without addressing the cause will not solve the problem longterm.

I recommend streamlining nutrition. Stick to the same basic common sense and balance including a good quality probiotic. Aim to feed ingredients that facilitate the digestive process(moderate fat and proteins to spare the liver and kidneys for instance). Excess variety really stresses digestion as does ingredient imbalance including numerous commercial “treats”.

Ingestible toys and treats wear out (chaff) the intestinal lining and digestive process. They add unnecessary work to an already fragile environment and can be the last straw to causing a longterm Inflammatory Bowel condition expressed by chronic diarrhea and vomiting and inability to tolerate anything but a specific very limited ingredient food.

You should be aware that raw vegetables and fruits can cause indigestion cheese often causes allergies.

“Treats” to avoid especially –

- Different treats of variable composition and texture such as greenies, chews, strips, antlers bones (the latter two also cause teeth fractures).

Your dogs love your attention. Give them lots of love and playtime with supervision and appropriate indestructible safe toys.