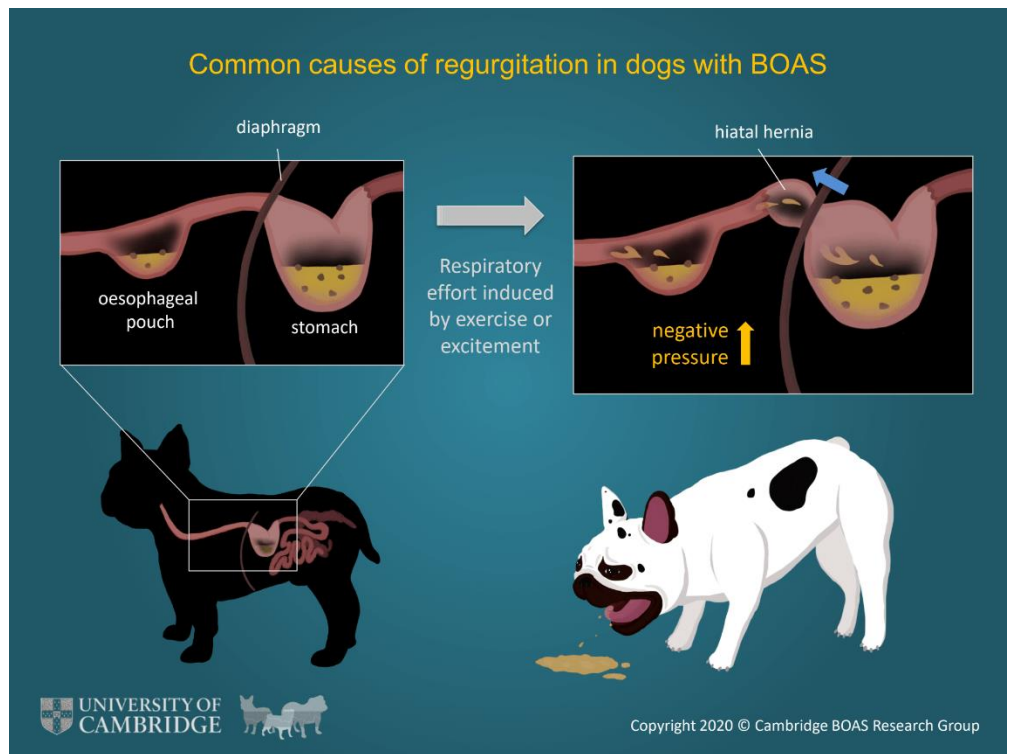


## Brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome (BOAS)

Why does my dog bring up food or fluid when they are excited? Is it related to BOAS?

Regurgitation is a very common symptom shown by many brachycephalic dogs. It is the passive bringing up of saliva, stomach fluid or undigested food from the stomach, via the food pipe (oesophagus), out of the mouth. Sometimes the regurgitated liquid is ejected from the mouth, sometimes it is swallowed straight back down ('silent' regurgitation, though often dogs will burp, lip smack or make gagging sounds when they do this).



In many cases, regurgitation is related to BOAS. High negative pressure in the chest during breathing results from an obstructed upper airway, particularly during exercise or excitement. In turn this high negative pressure 'sucks' part of the stomach into the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity –the so called 'sliding hiatal hernia'. Usually regurgitation will improve (and sometimes it may resolve) after BOAS surgery as the negative pressure decreases.

However, there are other causes of regurgitation and therefore surgery does not resolve the problem in all dogs. For example, many brachycephalic dogs will also have an abnormally shaped oesophagus (pouch or deviation), and some may have oesophageal motility problems, primary hiatal hernias or acid reflux from the stomach. In some cases, lifetime medicine or further surgery may be required.

It is useful to provide the following details to your vet during the consultation to help with diagnosis:

1. When does your dog regurgitate: during/after excitement or exercise, during/after drinking/eating or waking up after sleep?
2. Does your dog bring up undigested food or saliva/foam or stomach fluid?
3. Does your dog smack his/her lips excessively?
4. How long has the problem gone on for? Since a puppy, as the dog has grown or acute in onset later in life?

If regurgitation is left untreated, the stomach acid will cause inflammation and irritation of the upper airway, which can worsen BOAS, and the upper gastrointestinal tract. In addition, the risk of aspiration pneumonia will also increase.

Credit: Cambridge BOAS Research Group