



# Meet the French Bulldog!

*The Clown in the Cloak of a Philosopher*

*Congratulations* on your new French Bulldog puppy!

By registering your puppy with the American Kennel Club, you have taken the first step in what we hope will be a long and happy journey with your Frenchie. Founded over a century ago, the French Bull Dog Club of America promotes the welfare of this wonderful companion dog by:

- Educating judges, breeders, and owners
- Breeder referrals
- Promoting veterinary medical research
- Supporting breed rescue
- Holding specialty shows
- Official club publications
- Club website at <http://www.frenchbulldogclub.org>

We hope this flyer will provide you with some basic information that will help you as you get to know your French Bulldog. Please visit our website for more information about the breed.

## HISTORY

In the latter part of the 19th century, the lacemakers of Nottingham, England, began selectively breeding a smaller Bulldog as a lap pet. Displaced by the Industrial Revolution, many of the lacemakers crossed the English Channel, taking their small bulldogs with them to France. Some of these toy or miniature bulldogs made their way to Paris, where well-to-do Americans on the Grand Tour of Europe saw them and began bringing them to the US. In 1897, the French Bull Dog Club of America was formed, the first club in the world dedicated exclusively to the welfare of this wonderful breed.

## BREED STANDARD

The AKC Breed Standard describes “an active, intelligent, muscular dog of heavy bone, smooth coat, compactly built, and of medium or small structure. Expression alert, curious and interested.” For a full description of the various features of the breed, please visit the club website, and click on *Breed Standard*. An Illustrated Standard may also be purchased from the FBDCA for a nominal sum (see *Contact Information* at the end of this flyer).

## HEALTH CARE AND CONCERNS

Find a good veterinarian, preferably one who has other short-faced patients, and provide your Frenchie with regular checkups, routine vaccinations, tests for intestinal parasites, heartworm prevention, and flea and tick control. Your vet should do regular dental checkups and care, and you should clean your dog’s teeth regularly at home as well.

As a short-faced (“brachycephalic”) and dwarf (“chondrodystrophic”) breed, French Bulldogs have some health concerns that you should be aware of. The short face makes their breathing less efficient than that of long-nosed



breeds, so Frenchies have less tolerance of heat, exercise, and stress... all of which increase their need to breathe. Keep your Frenchie cool in warm weather, and avoid strenuous exercise. If your dog seems to overheat or become stressed too easily, with noisy breathing and sometimes spitting up foam, consult the vet and have its airway evaluated for pinched nostrils or an elongated soft palate. Anesthesia is also more risky in short-faced dogs, so be sure your veterinarian is experienced with such breeds should your Frenchie need to be anesthetized for any reason.

The spine also merits special attention. Like other dwarf breeds, the stocky Frenchie frequently has abnormal vertebrae and also premature degeneration of the intervertebral discs. While the spine is supported by good musculature, herniation of degenerated discs can cause major problems, and most symptomatic back problems are due to disc disease rather than to abnormal vertebrae. Lifelong exercise precautions are warranted, such as limited use of stairs and jumping. For information about general health considerations and specifically about airway and spine problems, see the French Bull Dog Club of America’s Web site at: [www.frenchbulldogclub.org](http://www.frenchbulldogclub.org). Click on the *Health and Genetics* section, then on *Health Links*. Also under the *Health and Genetics* section, see a *Letter to My Vet* near the bottom of the web page.

The French Bull Dog Club of America supports through various fundraisers a French Bulldog Donor Advised Fund with the Canine Health Foundation, a nonprofit charitable organization whose mission is to help dogs live longer, healthier lives. The FBDCA also maintains a Memorial Fund that allows anyone to make tax-free donations to the French Bulldog Donor Advised Fund in memory, or in honor, of dogs or people. The French Bulldog Donor Advised Fund of the CHF provides financial support for research on health issues of importance to the breed. More information can be found at the club’s website in the Health and Genetics section, and on the CHF website at [www.akcCHF.org](http://www.akcCHF.org).

## GENERAL CARE

French Bulldogs don't require a lot of grooming or exercise (though they need some daily exercise to stay in shape), and generally do well in small living quarters. They are not noisy and most of them are very fond of people, though there are individual differences in how well they get along with other



animals. They should never be allowed to run free, and should only be allowed outdoors in a fenced yard or on a leash.

While a few can swim, most cannot, and must never be left unattended around water. In warm climates, air

conditioning in the house and car are a must! Indestructible dog toys are best, as those powerful Frenchie jaws can destroy less durable ones; and rawhide type chews should not be used because when they soften they can become lodged in a Frenchie's throat.

Occasional brushing keeps the coat shiny, and regular nail trimming is a must since Frenchies don't usually wear their nails down by running. Regular cleaning of the ears and of the deep facial folds will prevent these sensitive areas from becoming irritated, and regular checking of the anal sacs will prevent problems with these. Your vet can advise you on how to care for the ears, skin folds, and anal sacs as well as on feeding your puppy. Whatever high quality dogfood you choose, do NOT supplement it with table scraps.

## TRAINING

A crate trained puppy is easier to housebreak. A dog regards its crate as its den, a safe haven and home. If you travel, the dog is safest in his crate in your vehicle and also when you stay in hotels or visit other people. If he should be ill or injured and need to be kept quiet, this is much easier if he is happy in a crate. In warm areas, cooling pads and fresh water should be placed in the crate too.

The breeder of your dog can advise you about how to crate train and housebreak your puppy. Your public library will also have numerous books on this topic. You should take your Frenchie to training classes as soon as he is old enough and has all of his immunizations, usually at about 3 months of age. This will get him accustomed to being around other dogs and people, will teach you how to communicate your wishes to him, and will teach him such basics as walking well on a lead, sitting, staying, and coming on command. Although cute and cuddly-looking, a French Bulldog has a big personality and needs an adequate amount of training to make it a civilized

companion. French Bulldogs are not generally considered a performance breed, and will have special concerns (overheating and overexertion) if you are thinking of activities such as agility and field work. They can perform successfully in obedience, conformation and junior handling, and many of them are excellent at working in Pet Therapy programs.

Identify your French Bulldog with collar tags in case it is lost. AKC Companion Animal Recovery (CAR) offers a free dog tag with recovery information and a 24-hour toll-free hotline to help locate owners 7 days a week. For further protection, register your dog's permanent tattoo or microchip with AKC CAR. Call 800-252-7894 or go to [www.akccar.org](http://www.akccar.org) for more information.

## SPAYING, NEUTERING, or BREEDING?

If you bought your Frenchie as a pet, you should have it spayed or neutered at about 6 months of age, before it is sexually mature. This will eliminate the possibility of an *accidental* breeding, reduce or eliminate the chance of certain types of cancers, and will make it a better pet. The American Kennel Club allows spayed and neutered dogs to compete in obedience, agility, tracking, Canine Good Citizen tests, field work (earth dog, lure coursing, herding), and Junior Showmanship, but not in Conformation.

If you are considering breeding your Frenchie, and bought it with the breeder's understanding that you intend to do so, please take this responsibility very seriously. First, be sure that your Frenchie conforms well to the breed standard. Second, be sure that she or he has a good temperament, being neither overly aggressive nor overly shy. You should consider breeding only after careful study of the breed standard, educating yourself about the breed's health issues, and honestly evaluating your dog's conformation and health.

For a short summary of what you should consider if you are thinking of breeding your Frenchie, go to the FBDC Website and in the Health & Genetics section click on *Breeder Recommendations*. Don't go into the breeding of French Bulldogs with the intention of making money; most conscientious breeders do well just to break even. Be sure that you will be able to place all puppies in good and loving homes, and should these placements not work out, that you would be able to take back the puppies.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about French Bulldogs or about the French Bull Dog Club of America, consult the club's website at <http://www.frenchbulldogclub.org> or contact the club Secretary, Pat Kosinar ([pkosinar@sunflower.com](mailto:pkosinar@sunflower.com) or 785-865-1559) 2108 Inverness Drive Lawrence, KS 66047

*The Illustrated Standard* may be ordered for \$5 from: Ann Jensen ([BullyMom@aol.com](mailto:BullyMom@aol.com) or 541-607-8235) 1642 N. Danebo Eugene, OR 97402

