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The Frenchie Heat Safety Card

Stick it on the fridge. Overheating? Cool first, call while you cool, then go.



Warning signs, stage by stage

STAGE	WHAT YOU MAY SEE	WHAT TO DO NOW
Warning	Panting harder than usual but still alert; settles within a few minutes of rest in shade	**Stop the walk, rest in shade or AC, offer water and head home slowly.**
Mild	Heavy, noisy or labored panting that doesn't settle; tiredness, lagging behind or lying down on the walk; lots of drool	**Mild heatstroke: stop, get to shade or AC, start cooling with water now and call your vet.**
Moderate	Vomiting or diarrhea, wobbling, a single seizure, collapsing and getting back up	**Emergency. Cool now, call your vet while you cool and go in once you reach the stopping point in first aid step 4.**
Severe	Confused or not responding normally, bloody diarrhea, bleeding or bruising, blue or gray gums	**Life-threatening. Cool now, call ahead and get to the nearest emergency vet, still cooling in the car if you leave before the stopping point.**

A dark red tongue or a racing heart? Cool now, call your vet and be ready to go in. Don't wait for a thermometer: act on the signs (Hall et al., 2021; Morgan, 2021).

First aid: cool first, transport second

1. **Stop and get out of the heat.** End the walk or game immediately. Carry your Frenchie if you can, into shade, an air-conditioned building or your car with the AC running. Don't make an overheated dog walk home.
2. **Cool with cool tap water, now.** Stand or lay your dog in cool tap water (a tub, kiddie pool or sink), head supported above the water, and stay with them the whole time. Can't immerse? Run cool water over the body, especially the belly where the coat is thinnest, soak to the skin and add a fan or the car's AC. Keep water off the face and keep re-wetting.
3. **Call your vet while you cool.** Have someone else call, or use speaker. Tell the clinic you're bringing in a flat-faced dog with suspected heatstroke. At the stopping point in step 4, pat your dog dry and go, AC on high. Leaving sooner? Keep cooling in the car.
4. **Check the temperature if you can, every few minutes.** Use a digital rectal thermometer. The 2026 RECOVER first-aid guidelines suggest stopping at about 103.5—104°F (39.7—40°C). For noisy, obstructed breathing, which many Frenchies have, cool until the panting clearly eases or the temperature reaches 101.5°F (38.6°C), whichever comes first, never below. No thermometer? About 15 minutes, then go (Mandell et al., 2026). Dr. Judy Morgan stops at 102°F (about 38.9°C). Expert opinion, so check often and let your vet take over.
5. **See a vet the same day, even if your dog perks up.** Heatstroke can damage the kidneys and the blood's ability to clot, and that damage can take a day to show.

× No ice-cold water or ice baths × No wet towels laid on top instead of soaking the coat × Never leave your dog alone in the water

Emergency numbers

My vet (name and phone)	24-hour clinic (name and phone)	Clinic address and drive time
Pet insurance (policy number and phone)	Integrative vet (name and phone)	Normal weight and breathing

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— PREVENTION FIRST

Summer Rules for Frenchies

Most heatstroke starts with an ordinary walk, not a hot car. Plan the day around the heat.

Why it matters: Frenchies had about 6.5 times the heatstroke odds of Labradors in UK vet records, and about three in four cases with a known trigger started with exercise (Hall et al., 2020a; 2020b). No temperature is proven safe: watch your dog's breathing, not the forecast.

Walks and play

- ✓ Walk early and late, in a well-fitted harness, not a collar
- ✓ Let your Frenchie set the pace, with sniff breaks
- ✓ Pavement too hot for the back of your hand? Too hot for paws. Choose shade and grass
- ✓ Carry water and stop at the first heavy panting
- ✓ Turn back early: the walk home is half the trip
- ✓ Warm or humid day? No fetch or running games; midday is quick potty breaks only

Hot cars: the first hour

5 min	30 min	60 min	117°F
about 3°F hotter	about 80% of the rise	about 40°F hotter	inside on a 72°F day

- ✗ Never leave your Frenchie in a parked car, even for a minute, in the shade or with the windows down
- ✓ Run the AC before your dog gets in
- ✓ Dog in distress in a hot car? Call local emergency services or animal control

Dark sedan, clear days, 72—96°F outside; cracked windows barely helped (McLaren et al., 2005).

Travel

- ✓ American Airlines and Delta: no snub-nosed breeds as checked pets or cargo. Cabin only, under the seat (about 18 × 11 × 11 inches); many adults are too big
- ✓ Rules change: check your airline before you book
- ✓ Road trips: AC first, window shades, water and a bowl
- ✓ Find the nearest emergency vet at your destination

A lean body

- ✓ Dogs at or above their breed's average weight had about 40% higher heatstroke odds (Hall et al., 2020a)
- ✓ Extra weight raises airway obstruction risk in flat-faced breeds (Dr. Jean Dodds, Hemopet)
- ✓ Weigh portions and count treats
- ✓ Seniors or heart or breathing issues: shorter walks, more AC, call the vet sooner

Heat-day checklist

- ☐ **Morning:** early walk, harness, water
- ☐ **Midday:** AC, water, cool tile or mat
- ☐ **Afternoon:** brain games, not zoomies
- ☐ **Evening:** walk once the ground cools
- ☐ **Overnight:** cool room, airflow, water
- ☐ **All day:** no parked cars, ever

Heat emergency kit

Keep one at home and one in the car from late spring to early fall.

To cool

- ☐ A large bottle of water
- ☐ A collapsible bowl
- ☐ A spray bottle and a small battery fan

Know your cooling spot: tub, shower or kiddie pool.

To check

- ☐ A digital thermometer with lubricant
- ☐ A note of your dog's normal breathing and weight

Practice a temperature check with treats.

To call

- ☐ Your vet and 24-hour emergency clinic
- ☐ Your pet insurance details

Tell sitters, groomers and daycare your dog overheats easily.

More help: read the full French Bulldog Heat Safety guide and our BOAS guide. **Sources:** Hall et al., 2020a, Scientific Reports; Hall et al., 2020b, Animals; Hall et al., 2021, Scientific Reports; Hall et al., 2023, Veterinary Sciences; Mandell et al., 2026, RECOVER First Aid Guidelines, JVECC; Hanel et al., 2016, JVECC; McLaren et al., 2005, Pediatrics; Bailey et al., 2025, Veterinary Medicine and Science; Morgan, 2021, Naturally Healthy Pets; Dodds, 2020, Hemopet; American Airlines and Delta pet pages, October 2026.

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