BESTFRENCHBULLDOG.COM · FREE GUIDE · 2027 EDITION

10 PRINTABLE PAGES

The Frenchie Longevity Blueprint

A prevention-first plan for a longer, healthier French Bulldog life. Built on the research, written for real life.

From the editors of BestFrenchBulldog.com · Updated October 2026



best french bulldog

9.8 years

Median lifespan of French Bulldogs in the largest study, of 584,734 UK dogs. Half lived longer.



McMillan et al., Scientific Reports, 2024

+1.8 years

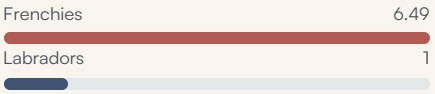
Longer median life for Labradors fed 25% less than their littermates, from 8 weeks old, for life.



Kealy et al., JAVMA, 2002 (Purina-funded)

6.5× the odds

Of heatstroke in French Bulldogs compared with Labradors in UK vet records. About 1 in 7 affected dogs died.



Hall et al., Scientific Reports, 2020

A NOTE FROM THE BFB TEAM

In the largest study to date, the typical French Bulldog lived about 9.8 years, and half lived longer. This Blueprint is our plan for helping yours land in that longer half, checked against the research.

No plan can promise years. But a lean body, real food, cool movement, a calm home and two kinds of vet shift the odds in your Frenchie's favor. Start anywhere. Start today.

Every page links to a free, full guide on BestFrenchBulldog.com with the research behind it, and we update this Blueprint as new studies come out.

The BestFrenchBulldog.com team

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2 **Start here: your first 30 days.** The 10 habits that matter most.

3 **Why Frenchies need a plan.** Five big risks and what to watch for.

4 **The 7 pillars, part 1.** Body, food, movement, breath.

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7 **The plan by life stage.** Puppy to senior, plus a health record.

8 **Checklists and weight log.** Stick it on the fridge.

9 **Call your vet now.** Emergency decoder and care-team contacts.

10 **What's proven, what's promising.** The honest evidence table.

THE BLUEPRINT IN SEVEN PILLARS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A lean body	Species-right food	Smart daily movement	Cool, breathing-aware	Skin, folds, ears, teeth	A calm mind	Your care team

1 · Start with page 2
Pick your first three habits this week.

2 · Print pages 7–9
Fill in, tick off, log the weight.

3 · Bring it to your vet
Plan checkups, breathing grades and questions.

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START HERE

Your First 30 Days

If you only do ten things, do these. Ordered by how much they protect a Frenchie, starting with the strongest evidence.

1 Get lean, stay lean
Aim for a body score of 4—5 out of 9: ribs easy to feel, a waist from above. It's the best-proven longevity habit there is.
Pillar 1 · Weight log, page 8

2 Measure every meal
Use a cup or a scale, every time. Treats count, and should stay under 10% of daily calories.
Pillar 1 · page 4

3 Swap the collar for a harness
A harness keeps pressure off the neck and airway, which matters for a flat-faced breed.
Pillars 3—4 · page 4

4 Learn your dog's normal breathing
Listen on a cool, calm day so you'll hear when it changes. Book an official breathing grade (RFGS) from 12 months.
Pillar 4 · page 4

5 Walk cool, stop early
Go at the cool ends of the day and stop at the first heavy panting. Exercise started 74% of UK heatstroke cases with a known trigger.
Pillar 4 · Heat first aid, page 9

6 Protect the spine
Add a ramp to the couch and bed, and teach a solid "wait" at doors, stairs and the car.
Pillar 3 · page 4

7 Start a 30-second fold check
Wipe damp or dirty folds, then dry completely. Look at and sniff the ears weekly.
Pillar 5 · page 5

8 Move toward fresher food
A fresh, whole-food topper is a great first step away from ultra-processed food. Switch over 7—14 days, one change at a time.
Pillar 2 · Root causes, page 6

9 Build your care team
A conventional vet, an integrative vet, the nearest 24-hour ER and pet insurance, ideally enrolled before anything is in the vet record.
Pillar 7 · Contacts, page 9

10 Train force-free, a little every day
A reward-based trainer or puppy class, plus 5—10 minutes of training or play daily. Calm, confident dogs are safer dogs.
Pillar 6 · page 5

YOUR 30-DAY MINI PLAN

Week 1
- ☐ Weigh and body-score (page 8)
- ☐ Buy a well-fitting harness
- ☐ Start the daily fold check

Week 2
- ☐ Measure every meal, count treats
- ☐ Move walks to cool hours
- ☐ Add a ramp; practice "wait"

Week 3
- ☐ Book a vet visit; ask about RFGS
- ☐ Compare insurance before the visit
- ☐ Fill in the care team (page 9)

Week 4
- ☐ Start a fresh-food topper
- ☐ Book a force-free trainer
- ☐ Re-weigh and re-score

SAVE THESE NUMBERS IN YOUR PHONE TODAY

Your vet	_____
Nearest 24-hour emergency clinic	_____
ASPCA Animal Poison Control	**(888) 426-4435**
Pet Poison Helpline	**(855) 764-7661**

Both poison lines are open 24/7 and charge a consultation fee.

WHY THE ORDER MATTERS

Habit 1 is the only one with direct lifespan evidence in dogs. Habits 3—7 target the breed's biggest documented risks: airway, heat, spine and skin. Habits 8—10 shape everything else. You don't have to do them all at once. Pick three this week.

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Why Frenchies Need a Plan

A flat face, a compact spine and a narrow gene pool. Five risks to know, and what to watch for.

Problems start young. About 7 in 10 Frenchies (72%) had at least one health problem recorded by UK vets in a single year, at a median age of just 1.3 years (**O'Neill et al., 2018**). Prevention starts the week your puppy comes home.

THE FIVE BIG RISKS AT A GLANCE

BREATHING (BOAS)

54%

of 89 French Bulldogs in a Cambridge study were clinically affected on an exercise test.

WATCH FOR

- Noisy breathing while awake and calm
- Lagging on walks, slow to settle
- Bringing food back up; waking up gasping

Most owners miss the signs. Pillar 4.

SPINE (IVDD)

85–97%

of FGF4 gene copies in French Bulldogs carry the disc-disease variant, across studies.

WATCH FOR

- Crying when picked up, hunched back
- Stiff neck; won't jump or do stairs
- Wobbly legs; can't walk is an emergency

Disc trouble often starts young, around age 4. Pillars 1, 3.

HEAT

74%

of UK heatstroke cases with a known trigger started with exercise, usually a walk. Hot cars: about 5%.

WATCH FOR

- Heavy panting that won't settle
- Lagging or lying down on the walk
- Drool, a dark red tongue, wobbling

Watch breathing, not the forecast. Pillars 3, 4.

SKIN, FOLDS, EARS

11×

the odds of skin fold dermatitis compared with other dogs in UK vet records.

WATCH FOR

- Head shaking, smelly ears
- A red, damp or smelly fold
- Infections that keep coming back

Ear infection is the top recorded problem. Pillar 5.

GUT

67%

of 574 Frenchies in a 2025 German owner survey had shown gut signs at some point.

WATCH FOR

- Gas, soft or changeable stools
- Itchy paws and ears with gut signs
- Blood or black stool: call now

Gut and skin often travel together. Page 6.

THE GOOD NEWS

None of this changes your Frenchie's genes, but daily habits can shift the odds.

Every risk here has a daily habit that targets it. One habit, keeping your dog lean, has the strongest evidence for a longer life.

The 7 pillars on the next two pages turn these risks into a routine you can actually keep. **All 12 common problems →**

What French Bulldogs die from

Brain & spine
In young Frenchies. Brain (11.9%) and spinal cord disorders (9.5%) led recorded causes of death in a young UK population.

47%
Cancer, in older Frenchies. German owners named cancer in 35 of 75 deaths. Brain tumors appeared at a median age of about 9.

1 in 7
Heatstroke, the preventable one. Uncommon, but about 1 in 7 affected dogs died. Daily habits can largely prevent it.

No large study has recorded causes of death for the whole breed; these figures come from separate studies of different groups of dogs.

The 60-second Frenchie risk check

Tick anything that's true today. Each tick points to where to start.

- ☐ Snores or breathes noisily while awake and calm — Pillar 4
- ☐ Pants hard after short walks or on mild days — Pillars 3—4
- ☐ Walks on a collar instead of a harness — Pillar 3
- ☐ Regular gas, soft stools or itchy paws — Page 6
- ☐ No breathing grade (RFGS) on record — Pillar 4
- ☐ Ribs are hard to feel, or there's no waist from above — Pillar 1
- ☐ Jumps off the couch or bed, or runs the stairs — Pillar 3
- ☐ Red, damp or smelly folds, or head shaking — Pillar 5
- ☐ Teeth rarely or never brushed — Pillar 5
- ☐ No insurance, or no 24-hour ER number saved — Pillar 7 · page 9

Two or more ticks? Turn back to page 2 and make those habits your first three.

Sources: O'Neill et al., Canine Genetics and Epidemiology, 2018; O'Neill et al., Canine Medicine and Genetics, 2021; Liu et al., PLOS ONE, 2015; Reunanen et al., BMC Veterinary Research, 2025 (and earlier studies it cites); Mayousse et al., BMC Veterinary Research, 2017; Hinze et al., Companion Animal Health and Genetics, 2025; Hall et al., Scientific Reports, 2020; Hall et al., Animals, 2020; Grobman et al., JVIM, 2024. FGF4 figures are allele (gene copy) frequencies, not the share of dogs.

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Body, Food, Movement and Breath

Each pillar: why it matters, three things to do and where to read more.

PILLAR 1 A lean body

+1.8 yrs
longer median life for lean-fed Labradors in a lifelong trial

Why it matters. It's the best-proven longevity habit there is, and it costs nothing. In records from 13.3 million US dogs, obese dogs had about 1.5 years less life expectancy than dogs at ideal weight. Extra weight also raises heatstroke odds.

Kealy et al., JAVMA, 2002; Montoya et al., Frontiers in Veterinary Science, 2023; Hall et al., 2020

DO THIS

- **Aim for a 4—5 out of 9:** ribs easy to feel, a waist from above, a belly tuck from the side.
- **Measure every meal** and keep treats to no more than 10% of daily calories.
- **Weigh every month or two** and log it on page 8.

Lean doesn't mean hungry. It means measured meals and a body you can feel ribs on.

PILLAR 2 Species-appropriate food

49%
of 574 Frenchies in a 2025 survey had a food allergy or hypersensitivity

Why it matters. We lean toward a biologically appropriate raw food (BARF) diet, the approach Dr. Ian Billinghurst built around muscle meat, organs and raw meaty bones. We believe ultra-processed kibble isn't ideal for the canine species. Food won't change genes, but it's a daily lever for weight, gut and skin.

Hinze et al., 2025. Dr. Billinghurst's approach summarized in our words.

DO THIS

- **Feed real food in measured portions.** Fresh, whole-food toppers are a great first step.
- **Switch foods over 7—14 days** and change one thing at a time.
- **If your Frenchie regurgitates,** try 3—4 smaller meals, a slow-feed bowl and a few minutes upright after eating (Langford Vets).

Gut health guide → · Root causes, page 6

PILLAR 3 Daily movement, the smart way

74%
of UK heatstroke cases with a known trigger started with exercise

Why it matters. Movement keeps muscles strong, weight down and minds busy. In 2,031 Dachshunds, another disc-prone breed, dogs exercised more each day had lower odds of disc problems. For a Frenchie, the catch is heat, so adjust the intensity, not the habit.

Packer et al., Canine Genetics and Epidemiology, 2016; Hall et al., Animals, 2020

DO THIS

- **Several short, cool outings** beat one long, hot one. Add sniff walks where your dog sets the pace.
- **Walk on a harness, not a collar,** to keep pressure off the neck and airway.
- **Teach spine-smart habits:** a ramp to the couch and a solid "wait" at doors, stairs and the car.

IVDD guide → · Training guide →

PILLAR 4 Cool and breathing-aware

18 of 30
owners of BOAS-affected Frenchies said their dog rarely or never breathed noisily on walks

Why it matters. Snoring isn't a personality trait; it's how a blocked airway sounds. A flat face makes cooling harder too. Grade 2 or 3? Talk to an experienced surgeon. After airway surgery in 72 pugs and Frenchies, owners reported improvement in 88.5% of the 52 dogs whose owners replied.

Liu et al., PLOS ONE, 2015; Haimel & Dupré, JSAP, 2015

DO THIS

- **Book an official breathing grade** (RFGS) from 12 months, with yearly checks until age 2.
- **Walk at the cool ends of the day** and stop at the first heavy panting. Indoors, keep a cool, air-conditioned room.
- **Learn your dog's normal breathing** on a cool, calm day, so you'll hear when it changes.

BOAS guide → · Heat safety guide →

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Skin, Mind and Your Care Team

The daily routine, the calm home and the people in your Frenchie's corner.

PILLAR 5 Skin, folds, ears and teeth

14%
of young UK Frenchies had an ear infection recorded in one year, the most common problem

Why it matters. Deep folds, narrow ear canals and allergies keep skin and ears busy. Teeth matter too: 19% of Frenchies in a German survey had tartar. Flat-faced dogs also have more anesthesia complications, so prevention beats procedures.

O'Neill et al., 2018; Hinze et al., 2025; Gruenheid et al., JAVMA, 2018; Dr. Judy Morgan summarized in our words.

DO THIS

- **Do a 30-second daily fold check.** Wipe damp or dirty folds, then dry completely. Dry is the goal.
- **Look at and sniff the ears weekly.** Clean only when you see wax or debris; over-cleaning causes trouble too.
- **Brush teeth daily,** as Dr. Judy Morgan recommends, and get a yearly mouth check.

Skin, folds and ears guide → · Dental guide →

PILLAR 6 A calm mind

Day one
start gentle socialization the day your puppy comes home

Why it matters. Puppies are most open to new experiences from about 3 to 12—14 weeks. Behavior problems, not infections, are the leading cause of death in dogs under 3. In the long-lived dogs Dr. Karen Becker and Rodney Habib met, low stress was a common thread.

AVSAB, 2008; Iowa State University; Becker and Habib summarized in our words.

DO THIS

- **Train force-free:** a reward-based trainer, plus a puppy class from 7—8 weeks, at least 7 days after the first vaccines.
- **Bond every day:** 5—10 minute sessions in a cool room, handling practice, play and sniff walks.
- **Lower stress:** give your dog choices; cut back on scented candles, plug-ins and lawn chemicals.

Training guide → · Find a force-free trainer →

PILLAR 7 Your care team

1 in 180
Frenchie vaccine visits had a recorded reaction, the highest rate of any breed

Why it matters. Back, breathing and late-life care can be costly in this breed, and anything in the vet record before a policy starts can be excluded as pre-existing. Each extra vaccine at one visit raised reaction odds by about 25%.

Moore et al., JAVMA, 2023

DO THIS

- **Build a two-vet team:** a conventional vet for exams and emergencies, plus an integrative vet for nutrition and prevention.
- **Insure on day one,** before the first vet visit and before anything is on record.
- **Vaccinate smart:** core shots and rabies, fewer shots per visit; ask about a titer before core boosters.

Insurance guide → · Vaccines and titers → · Find an integrative vet →

The Forever Dog pillars, Frenchie-style

Dr. Karen Becker and Rodney Habib group longevity into four pillars, D.O.G.S. A framework, not a tested protocol.

D Diet. Less processed, fresher food. For a Frenchie: species-appropriate food, lean portions. Pillars 1—2

O Optimal movement. Daily vigorous movement. For a Frenchie: short and cool. Pillar 3

G Genetic predispositions. Daily choices shape how genes play out. For a Frenchie: graded parents, early screening. Pillars 4, 7

S Stress. Lower emotional and chemical stress. For a Frenchie: force-free training, calm vet visits. Pillar 6

Summarized in our words from Becker and Habib's interviews and Iowa State University's feature. Not an endorsement of BestFrenchBulldog.com.

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Gut, Skin and Smart Supplements

Itchy skin, gas and soft stools often travel together. What the research says, and what's worth adding to the bowl.

The gut–skin connection

In two recent studies, dogs with atopic dermatitis had **less diverse gut bacteria** than healthy dogs, with more of some types (such as *Escherichia/Shigella*) and fewer of others.

In a 2026 placebo-controlled trial, a fecal transplant improved skin lesions and cut medication use in atopic dogs, though itch improved in both groups.

The bottom line: the link between gut and skin is real. Exactly how to use it is still being worked out, which is why we start with food and the basics before reaching for products.

Sugita et al., Scientific Reports, 2023; Thomsen et al., Microbiome, 2023; Felten et al., Veterinary Dermatology, 2026

What integrative vets put first

- **Find the upstream driver.** When gut trouble keeps coming back, Dr. Katie Woodley looks for what's still driving it (diet, dental disease, stress, medications) before reaching for a probiotic.
- **The mouth is part of the gut.** Dr. Katie Kangas points out that chronic dental disease is a steady source of inflammation for the whole body.
- **Food first.** Dr. Richard Pitcairn and Dr. Ruth Roberts build their approach on fresh, whole-food meals.
- **Change one thing at a time,** and keep a simple symptom diary so you can see what actually helped.

Doctor positions summarized in our words from their own published articles and sites. Citing a vet doesn't mean they've reviewed or endorsed BestFrenchBulldog.com.

SUPPLEMENTS BY BENEFIT, GRADED HONESTLY

SUPPLEMENT	WHAT DOG STUDIES SHOW	OUR GRADE
JOINTS AND MOBILITY		
Omega-3s (fish oil; green-lipped mussel counted here)	The strongest evidence of any joint supplement for arthritis pain, across a 2022 review of 69 dog trials.	Good
Glucosamine + chondroitin	No effect against control in the same review; the authors say it should no longer be recommended for arthritis pain.	Not supported
Collagen, including UC-II	Weak at best; the trials were small and mostly low quality.	Limited
SPINE (IVDD)		
Any supplement	No dog trial shows any supplement prevents disc disease. What the data point to is a lean body, daily exercise and spine-smart habits (page 4).	No evidence yet
SKIN AND ITCH		
Omega-3s	A small add-on benefit in long-term atopic dermatitis, taking about 2 months; not useful for acute flares, and unlikely to work alone.	Moderate (add-on)
Probiotics	One trial improved skin lesions but not itch; a 2025 review of five studies found no significant effect.	Mixed
GUT AND DIGESTION		
Probiotics for diarrhea	A systematic review found a very limited effect, in small studies that were often industry-funded.	Mixed
Soluble fiber (psyllium)	Helped chronic large-bowel diarrhea in one small study with no control group.	Limited
BRAIN AND HEALTHY AGING		
MCT oil	Improved learning in aging beagles and signs of canine dementia in senior dogs, in studies run by the diet's maker.	Moderate
Antioxidant-rich diet	In a 2-year study of aging beagles, an antioxidant diet plus mental enrichment worked best together.	Moderate

How we think about supplements. They can fill gaps; they don't replace food, a lean body and daily habits. No doses here on purpose: choose products and amounts with your vet. Quality matters: Dr. Woodley suggests checking EPA + DHA per serving and contaminant testing, and tossing fish oil that smells rancid.

Grades are our editorial judgment of the dog research. Good: consistent dog trials or reviews. Moderate: some controlled dog trials. Limited: small or uncontrolled studies. Mixed: results conflict. **Gut health guide →** **Allergies guide →**

Sources: Barbeau-Grégoire et al., Int J Mol Sci, 2022; Olivry et al. (ICADA), BMC Vet Res, 2015; Pacheco et al., J Vet Med Sci, 2025; Jensen & Bjørnvad, JVIM, 2019; Alves et al., BMC Vet Res, 2021; Pan et al., Br J Nutr, 2010; Pan et al., Front Nutr, 2018; Milgram et al., Neurobiol Aging, 2005; Packer et al., 2016.

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The Plan by Life Stage

The foundation never changes. What you add to it does.

STAGE	FOOD AND BODY	MOVEMENT AND MIND	VET, TESTS AND PAPERWORK
Before day one Choosing a puppy	Look for parents with RFGS breathing grades of 0 or 1, open nostrils, DNA panels and eye, kneecap and hip screening, and ask to see the records. Ask about genetic diversity: within a breed, dogs with more closely related parents have lived shorter lives. Or adopt; rescue Frenchies need homes too. **Breeder directory → Rescues →**		
Puppy 8 weeks to 1 year	• A complete diet for growth, ideally BARF or fresh • About 4 small meals a day at first • Weigh weekly; treats max 10% • Lean starts now: the lean-fed Labs began at 8 weeks	• Socialize gently from day one • Force-free trainer plus a small puppy class • Crate, potty, handling, ramp and "wait" • Short, cool play on a harness	• Insure before the first vet visit • Vet visit in the first week • Core shots every 2—4 weeks; last at 16+ weeks • Booster or titer at about 6 months
Young adult 1 to 3 years	• Species-appropriate food, measured • Body condition 4—5 of 9 • Weigh every month or two	• Cool daily walks plus sniff walks • Keep up ramp and harness routines • Keep training short and fun	• RFGS grade from 12 months, yearly to age 2 • Grade 2 or 3? See a BOAS-experienced surgeon • Spay or neuter timing: decide with your vet • Start daily tooth brushing
Prime years 3 to 7 years	• Hold a 4—5 body condition • Count treats in the daily total • Real food stays central, in lean portions	• Walk in the cool of the day • Keep up spine-smart habits: Frenchies with disc herniation had a median age of about 4	• Yearly exam with a mouth check • Consider yearly baseline bloodwork • Core boosters no more than every 3 years; ask about titers • Budget insurance for the age-8 price
Senior About 7 and up	• Let bloodwork shape the food • Ask about brain and kidney health • Weigh monthly; watch for loss	• Gentle daily walks and sniffing games • Ramp to the couch, rugs on slippery floors • A cool, supportive bed	• Checkups twice a year with bloodwork, as Dr. Judy Morgan recommends • Seizures or a sudden behavior change: same-day vet

There's no official senior age; with a median lifespan near 10, we start senior care at about 7, and it's never too late to make changes. For brain aging, Hemopet (Dr. Jean Dodds) suggests omega-3s, antioxidant-rich foods and MCT oil started low, plus daily walks; choose supplements with your vet. Sources: Yordy et al., Conservation Genetics, 2020; Kealy et al., 2002; Squires et al., JSAP, 2024 (WSAVA); Mayousse et al., 2017; Hemopet. Doctor positions summarized in our words.

MY FRENCHIE'S HEALTH RECORD

Name	Birthday	Came home (date and age)	Microchip number
Insurance enrolled (date)	Policy number	RFGS breathing grade and date	DNA panel results
Spay or neuter date	Last core vaccine or titer	Rabies due (per state law)	Baseline bloodwork (date)
Food and toppers	Allergies and reactions	Supplements (and why)	Last dental check

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STICK IT ON THE FRIDGE

Checklists and Weight Log

Small habits, done often. Tick as you go and bring the log to every checkup.

Every day

5 MIN

- [ ] Measured meals, treats counted
- [ ] Cool walk plus sniff time
- [ ] Quick fold check; wipe and dry
- [ ] Brush teeth
- [ ] 5—10 minutes of training or play

Every week

10 MIN

- [ ] Look at and sniff the ears
- [ ] Check toes, belly and armpits
- [ ] Fold and tail pocket clean, a few times
- [ ] Hands-on rib and waist check
- [ ] Listen to breathing at rest

Every month

20 MIN

- [ ] Weigh and score body condition
- [ ] Nose-to-tail skin and lump check
- [ ] Bathe if dirty; dry every fold
- [ ] Review treats and portions
- [ ] Note anything new for the vet

Every year

PLAN IT

- [ ] Exam with a mouth check
- [ ] Vaccines or titers, only what's due
- [ ] Baseline bloodwork (ask your vet)
- [ ] RFGS check until age 2
- [ ] Insurance renewal review

FOUR-WEEK HABIT TRACKER

Habit	Week 1							Week 2							Week 3							Week 4						
	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Measured meals, treats counted																												
Cool walk and sniff time																												
Fold check, wipe and dry																												
Teeth brushed																												
Training, handling or play																												
Ears: look and sniff **WEEKLY**																												
Rib and waist check **WEEKLY**																												

BODY CONDITION SCORE AND WEIGHT LOG

1—3 • Too thin
Bones easy to see

4—5 • Ideal
Ribs easy to feel, waist, tuck

6—7 • Overweight
Extra fat over the ribs

8—9 • Obese
No waist, ribs hard to feel

Use your hands, not just your eyes. Each point above 5 is roughly 10% extra body weight.

Month	Date	Weight (lb)	Score	Ribs	Waist	Tuck	Notes: food, treats, activity, vet
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							

WSAVA 9-point score (Laflamme, 1997); treats per Cline et al., JAAHA, 2021. Losing weight? Aim for 1—2% of body weight a week, with your vet.

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KEEP IT WHERE YOU CAN FIND IT

Call Your Vet Now: The Decoder

A starting point, not a diagnosis. When in doubt, call your vet or an emergency clinic.

Struggling to breathe, blue or gray gums, collapse	Emergency: call your vet or an emergency clinic now
Heat: heavy panting that won't settle, wobbling, a dark red tongue, vomiting on a warm day	Emergency: start cooling now and call your vet while you cool
Suddenly can't walk, dragging the legs, losing bladder control	Emergency: go now to a neurologist or emergency hospital
After a vaccine: facial swelling, hives, repeated vomiting, trouble breathing	Emergency: call your vet or an emergency clinic now
Ate something toxic (xylitol, grapes, chocolate, medications)	Emergency: call your vet, an ER or a poison line now
Gut: blood in the stool or black, tarry stool; a swollen or painful belly	Call your vet or an emergency clinic now
Back or neck pain: crying when picked up, hunched back, stiff neck, won't jump or do stairs	Same-day vet; strict rest from now on
A seizure, circling, head tilt, facial droop or a sudden change in personality	Same-day vet
Eyes: squinting, pawing at an eye, a cloudy or very watery eye	Same-day vet
Drinking or peeing much more, weight loss without a diet change	Vet visit this week, with bloodwork
Skin and ears: head shaking, smelly ears, red or smelly folds, constant itching	Book a visit this week
A new lump, louder breathing, bad breath, dropping food, night confusion	Book a check soon

Our summary of the decoders in our health, lifespan, IVDD, heat, gut, vaccine, emergency and skin guides, informed by Olby et al., JVIM, 2022 and Hall et al., Scientific Reports, 2021. Your own vet's advice comes first.

IF YOU SUSPECT HEATSTROKE: COOL FIRST, TRANSPORT SECOND

1 · Get out of the heat
Carry your Frenchie into shade, AC or the car with the AC on.

2 · Cool with water, now
Cool tap water with the head supported, or soak the coat and add a fan. No ice.

3 · Call while you cool
Tell the clinic a flat-faced dog is coming in. Keep cooling on the drive.

4 · See a vet anyway
Even if your dog perks up. Kidney and clotting damage can take a day to show.

Only about 1 in 5 overheated UK dogs whose records showed cooling had been cooled before reaching the vet (Hall et al., Veterinary Sciences, 2023).

MY FRENCHIE'S CARE TEAM

Conventional vet (name and phone)	Integrative vet (name and phone)
24-hour emergency clinic (phone)	Emergency clinic address and drive time
Veterinary neurologist (for back problems or seizures)	BOAS-experienced surgeon
Pet insurance (company, policy number)	Insurance claims phone
Force-free trainer	Weight, RFGS grade, medications

Poison lines, 24/7, fees apply: ASPCA Animal Poison Control (888) 426-4435 · Pet Poison Helpline (855) 764-7661. Find conventional and integrative vets in our **vet directory** and force-free trainers in our **trainer directory**. Remind the clinic your Frenchie is brachycephalic before any procedure, even a routine dental cleaning.

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HONEST ABOUT THE EVIDENCE

What's Proven, What's Promising

What helps Frenchies live longer, graded by the research. Grades are our editorial judgment.

LEVER	WHAT THE EVIDENCE SHOWS	FRENCHIE DATA?	GRADE
STRONG EVIDENCE FOR A LONGER LIFE			
Keep lean (score 4—5 of 9)	A lifelong Labrador trial plus a 13-million-dog records study agree	No	Strongest
PROMISING OR SENSIBLE: TARGETS KNOWN FRENCHIE RISKS			
Health-tested, less inbred parents	Inbreeding linked to more illness and, within a breed, shorter lives	Indirect	Moderate
Heat and airway care	No lifespan data; 6.5 times the heatstroke odds; about 1 in 7 affected dogs died	Risk data	Logical
Spine care and fast treatment	No lifespan data; about 93% of paralyzed dogs that could still feel deep pain walked after surgery	Risk data	Logical
Omega-3s	Good evidence for arthritis pain, a small add-on benefit for itchy skin; no lifespan data	No	Sensible
Dental care	Common, treatable disease; the often-quoted lifespan claim is unverified	No	Sensible
Daily movement, low stress	No dog lifespan study found; supports weight, spine and mood	No	Sensible
MIXED, UNPROVEN OR EXPERIMENTAL FOR LIFESPAN			
Spay or neuter timing	Neutered dogs lived longer on average but died more often of cancer	No	Mixed
Fresh or raw diet	No lifespan trial yet, as raw-feeding vet Dr. Peter Dobias notes	No	Not yet tested
Once-daily feeding	Fewer health conditions in a snapshot survey; lifespan not measured	No	Weak
LOY-002, rapamycin	Trials underway; no lifespan results, not approved to extend life	No	Experimental

Unproven isn't useless. We lean toward BARF and believe ultra-processed kibble isn't ideal for the canine species. We just won't say it adds years until a study shows it. Proven first, promising alongside.

KEEP GOING: THE FULL GUIDES

Lifespan
How long Frenchies live

Health problems
12 common issues

BOAS
Signs, grades, surgery

IVDD
Signs, treatment, prevention

Heat safety
Walks, first aid, summer

Gut health
A root-cause plan

Allergies
Itch, food and skin

Skin, folds and ears
The care routine

Training
Force-free, puppy to adult

First year
Your new Frenchie roadmap

Vaccines and titers
Fewer shots, smarter timing

Insurance
Compare Frenchie coverage

KEY SOURCES

McMillan et al., Sci Rep, 2024 (lifespan, 584,734 dogs)

Kealy et al., JAVMA, 2002 (lean-fed Labradors; Nestlé Purina)

Montoya et al., Front Vet Sci, 2023 (Royal Canin authors)

O'Neill et al., Canine Genet Epidemiol, 2018

O'Neill et al., Canine Med Genet, 2021

Hinze et al., Companion Anim Health Genet, 2025

Mayousse et al., BMC Vet Res, 2017

Reunanen et al., BMC Vet Res, 2025

Hall et al., Sci Rep, 2020; Animals, 2020; Vet Sci, 2023; Sci Rep, 2021

Liu et al., PLOS ONE, 2015; 2017

Haimel & Dupré, J Small Anim Pract, 2015

Olby et al., J Vet Intern Med, 2022 (ACVIM consensus)

Packer et al., Canine Genet Epidemiol, 2016

Gruenheid et al., JAVMA, 2018; Moore et al., JAVMA, 2023

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Olivry et al. (ICADA), BMC Vet Res, 2015

Sugita et al., Sci Rep, 2023; Thomsen et al., Microbiome, 2023; Felten et al., Vet Dermatol, 2026

Hoffman et al., PLOS ONE, 2013; Bray et al., GeroScience, 2022; Yordy et al., Conserv Genet, 2020

Cline et al., JAAHA, 2021; Squires et al., JSAP, 2024

AVSAB Puppy Socialization statement, 2008; OFA RFGS; Langford Vets BOAS sheet

Vets, summarized in our words: Becker & Habib; Dr. Judy Morgan; Hemopet (Dr. Jean Dodds); Dr. Peter Dobias; Dr. Ian Billinghurst; Dr. Katie Woodley; Dr. Katie Kangas; Dr. Richard Pitcairn; Dr. Ruth Roberts. Citing a vet doesn't mean they've reviewed or endorsed BestFrenchBulldog.com.

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