

STINGS AND BITES

Unfortunately, you often do not know what has bitten your French Bulldog and when it may have occurred. However due to your Frenchie having a shortened airway it pays to not be dismissive when your loved one presents with symptoms of a bite or sting. The Frenchie airway is easily obstructed by any swelling in the mouth or throat—areas where a Frenchie may easily be stung. Puppies can be particularly curious on their outings into the outside world and a buzzing bee or wasp is just as interesting as an innocuous butterfly.

Symptoms of an insect bite can range from swelling and hives over the body to fever and chills or even shock, depending upon the size and health of the dog and the number of times it has been bitten. If a Frenchie has been stung in the mouth, laboured breathing or even asphyxiation can occur. **THIS IS AN EMERGENCY SITUATION.** If your pet exhibits these symptoms or any other signs of generalized toxicity, call your vet. They will administer antihistamine and/or steroids. Dogs which have the habit of chasing bees can become so sensitised to bee stings, that they can develop a hyperacute, severe reaction which can be life-threatening within 10-15 minutes. Your vet may arrange for you to have medication on hand to administer, therefore gaining extra time to get to the vet.

ARTHRITIS AND WINTER CHILLS

Arthritis is caused by the wear and tear of the joints over the years and can often be the result of accidents and fractures in youth. Damage to any joint, whatever the cause, can result in the development of arthritis in old age. Symptoms of arthritis include stiffness of movement, difficulty in getting up in the morning, slowness going up or down stairs, reduced ability of affected limbs to bear weight and limping. The symptoms increase in severity in cold or damp weather. Treatment is aimed at reducing pain because once arthritis is present they cannot be reversed. Talk to your vet about the best medication for your Frenchie.

What can you do at home?

GLUCOSAMINE: is a useful supplement for conditions such as arthritis, disc degeneration, ligament, tendon and joint injuries. It can be purchased from the health food aisle in your supermarket or even City Farmers now stock it. Glucosamine helps to protect and nourish connective tissues and cartilage, reducing pain and improving function and it can significantly reduce pain and inflammation, improve mobility and regenerate damaged joint cartilage. It is considered to be very safe and can be used with anti-arthritis medications. Caution with use in diabetic Frenchies. Dose is 250-500mg daily for small dogs and 500-1000mg daily for medium dogs.

FISH OILS: Herrings, sardines, salmon, mackerel and other cold water fish contain high levels of omega-3 fatty acids and may be especially beneficial for old dogs, skin allergies, heart disorders and arthritis. Consider feeding your dog these types of fish 2-3 times per week, the tinned variety found in the tinned fish section of your supermarket. Alternatively vets and City Farmers now have speciality products for dogs.

ACUPUNCTURE: is perhaps best known for its use in pain relief. It helps to relieve pain, reduce muscular spasms, improve circulation, reduce swelling and improve healing. It can be used to treat arthritis in the stifle, hock, wrist, shoulders, hips and elbows.

BEDDING: including blankets, coats and electric blankets. Good bedding is essential for the arthritis sufferer as it ensures that the dog is not sleeping on cold, hard floors. Trampoline beds are comfortable, but be sure to add a blanket for warmth and protection from draughts. Needless to say, good shelter from the elements is essential, as our Frenchies get older more time indoors is preferred.

Weight should be kept reasonably controlled, particularly in winter.

WEIGHT: obese dogs will really suffer if they have arthritis.

MASSAGE: a total of 20 drops of either or all of juniper berry, rosemary, lavender, thyme, ginger mix in 20mls of sweet almond oil. Massage a teaspoon of this into the affected area when necessary.

Other supplements to try include apple cider vinegar mixed in drinking water (small amount), probiotics, digestive enzymes, cod liver oil, vitamins C and E

References:
"The New Dog Owner's Manual" by Karen Hedburg
"The French Bulldog" by Steve Eltinge
"Healthy Dogs" by Dr Barbara Fougere