

This Breed Is So Damaged These Pups Can't Even Fit Through the Birth Canal

It's a travesty what breeders have done to these wonderful dogs, and sadly, the DNA damage may not be reversible. Known for bad breeding practices, many are in constant pain and can't eat normally or even walk due to inherited deformities.

Reviewed by Dr. Becker

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- The English Bulldog is the “poster dog” for bad breeding practices that destroy the health of the breed
- They rank second of all breeds in congenital diseases and related deaths among puppies
- In addition to brachycephalic syndrome, these dogs suffer from a long list of other health problems unrelated to their short muzzles
- A University of California, Davis study of the DNA of over 100 English Bulldogs concludes that it may be impossible to return the breed to good health
- According to the researchers, this breed now lacks the diversity in its gene pool to make desperately needed health improvements

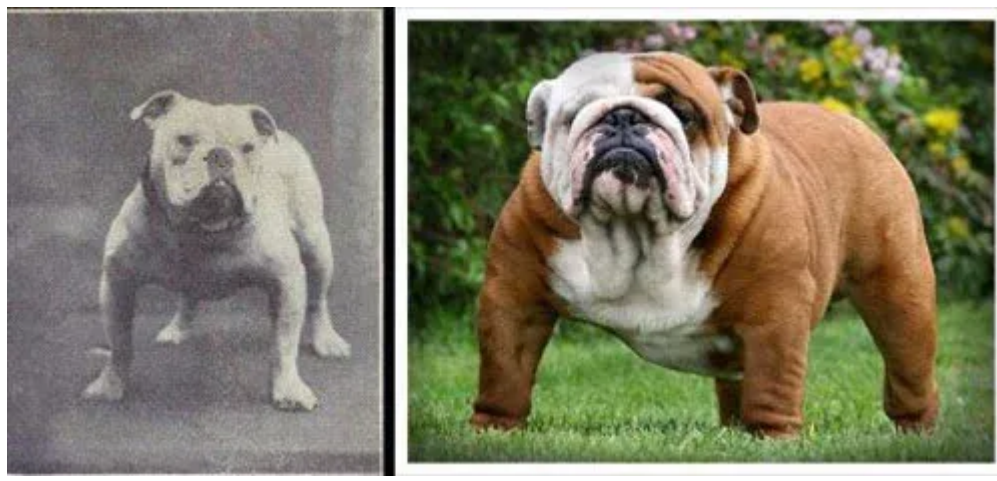
Editor's Note: This article is a reprint. It was originally published December 21, 2016.

It's heartbreaking to see the outcome of poor breeding in dogs — they can't breathe, can't eat normally, can't run and in some cases, can't even walk.

Many of these animals are in constant pain. They suffer chronic physiological stress as a result of significant physical limitations that have been deliberately imposed on them by misguided and unscrupulous breeders, breed clubs and kennel clubs.

Poster Dog for Bad Breeding — The English Bulldog

There are several dog breeds that have suffered at the hands of humans determined to exaggerate certain physical features to the detriment of the dogs' health. One of the most damaged is the English Bulldog. The English Bulldog in 1915 and the 2015 version:



By: [Science and Dogs](#)

According to veterinary journal dvm360:

*"They can't fit through their mothers' birth canals. They're plagued by serious respiratory problems because they are brachycephalic. They die at a median age of a little over 8 years of age."*¹

Not only do English Bulldogs have brachycephalic syndrome due to their pushed-in faces, they're also prone to a long list of other health problems, including:²

- Flat chest, a chest bone deformity in which the middle of the chest appears to be flat or concave, rather than slightly rounded
- Splayed legs, a condition in which the muscles that pull the legs together are weak, causing the dog to lie flat on the floor and paddle around like a turtle
- Cleft palate, in which the roof of the mouth and/or lip fail to close during gestation
- Chondrodysplasia, a skeletal disorder that can cause hip and elbow dysplasia as well as other joint and spinal problems
- Dental, eye, skin, heart and immune system problems

English Bulldogs rank second of all breeds in congenital diseases and related deaths among puppies. The health problems of these poor dogs are well-documented, and are present from conception through adulthood.

Is the Damage Irreversible?

Researchers at the University of California (UC), Davis analyzed the DNA of 102 English Bulldogs, including 87 dogs from the U.S. and 15 from other countries.³ They did a genetic comparison of those dogs with another 37 English Bulldogs brought to UC Davis for various health problems.

The study is the first large-scale assessment of the genetic diversity of English Bulldogs that used DNA rather than pedigrees. Study results confirmed a number of large regions of the genome have been altered as a result of centuries of breeding designed to manipulate and exaggerate the breed's appearance.

Sadly, the researchers concluded it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible to return the breed to good health.

*"We were taken back by how little 'wiggle room' still exists in the breed for making additional genetic changes," said lead researcher Dr. Niels Pedersen, of the UC Davis Center for Companion Animal Health.*⁴

'May Have Been Bred Into a Corner'

Excerpted from the UC Davis Study's "Plain English Summary:"

"The English bulldog is one of the most popular breeds in the world because of its child-like appearance and demeanor. The alterations in body type and behavior needed to create the breed have required physical changes well beyond its village dog ancestors.

These changes have occurred over hundreds of years but have become particularly rapid over the last decades.

Unfortunately, popularity does not equate to health and there have been increasing pressures on breeders to moderate the extreme physical changes that now affect the breed and its health.

Improving health through genetic manipulations presumes that enough diversity still exists to improve the breed from within, and if not, to add diversity by outcrossing to other breeds.

The loss of genetic diversity and extreme changes in various regions of the genome will make it very difficult to improve breed health from within the existing gene pool.

Loss of present genetic diversity is further threatened by rapid integration of new coat color mutations, increased wrinkling of the coat and attempts to create a more compact body type.

Contrary to current beliefs, brachycephaly and the resulting breathing problems in the breed are the result of complex changes in head structure, and cannot be corrected by merely lengthening the face.

Furthermore, other issues in English bulldogs need to be addressed, including many serious health problems that are not associated with brachycephaly, but are intrinsic to inbreeding."⁵

According to Pedersen, "... although English Bulldog breeders are managing the breed's limited genetic diversity in the best possible manner, many individual dogs today are the products of extreme inbreeding."

"We definitely would question whether further attempts to physically diversify the English bulldog, for example, by rapidly introducing new, rare coat colors; making the body smaller and more compact or adding further wrinkles in the coat are going to improve the already tenuous genetic diversity of the breed," Pedersen said.⁶

Tragically, the English Bulldog, according to the UC Davis researchers, now lacks the diversity in its gene pool to make desperately needed health improvements.

Sources and References

^{1,2} [dvm360, August 8, 2016 \(Archived\)](#).

^{3,5} [Canine Genetics and Epidemiology, Volume 3, Article number: 6 \(2016\)](#).

^{4,6} [UC Davis, July 28, 2016 \(Archived\)](#)

¹

²

³