



## Dr. Liz on Frenchies!

**Ed. Note:** We are very pleased to have Dr. Liz Bruce as a regular contributor on health care for the French Bulldog. You may submit questions to her at [DrLiz@justfrenchies.com](mailto:DrLiz@justfrenchies.com)



### Dr. Elizabeth Bruce

Dr. Bruce spent her formative years in New Jersey, Nantucket, and Vermont. She graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary School in 1992 and completed a large animal internship and residency at the University of Georgia. She is board

certified in large animal internal medicine. She spent three years in a mixed practice in rural Georgia before joining the Veterinary Medical Center team in Easton, MD. 1999. Liz's interests include internal medicine, dermatology and dentistry. When she is not working you will find her swimming, spending time with family, pets and friends, biking and horseback riding. [www.vmc-easton.com](http://www.vmc-easton.com)

### What is it about a Frenchie?

I remember my first ever French kiss. Suzanne Readmond and I were at the Talbot Kennel Club show eleven years ago, picking out our favorite dogs we wanted in our "kennel of 1,000 breeds." At the time we were pretty much Terrier people but we both were interested in branching out. The Bull Terrier was awfully cute, but when he bit the judge in the behind because the dog wanted his ribbon back, we felt Bull Terriers may be a bit too active and troublesome for the kennel.

Breed by breed we went on until we finally settled on the French Bulldog. The Frenchie seemed perfect: small, friendly, entertaining and adorable. For months Suzanne researched the breed and I dropped big hints to her husband about how important it was that she gets a Frenchie for her birthday. In October Suzanne and Ron went to the home of their handler to talk about an upcoming show. While there they saw a cute little Frenchie boy with whom Suzanne fell in love. As they were leaving to go home, Suzanne was told "Happy Birthday!" and the little dog was placed in her arms! Within minutes the puppy stole everyone's hearts, in addition to having full run of the dining room table after dinner.

Frenchies are fun but a lot different than Terriers from the veterinarian's viewpoint as the Terriers are pretty easy keepers compared to the Frenchies. We all had a pretty steep learning curve at Veterinary Medical Center those first few years when we started examining and treating French Bulldogs as Frenchies are a special breed and have health issues unique to them. A veterinarian examining a Frenchie must get a good history, listen to the owner, do a thorough physical exam to detect subtle changes and



choose appropriate diagnostic tests in a timely manner. Having a veterinarian you can trust is exceedingly important as a sick Frenchie can go downhill fast. It also helps if your veterinarian knows your animal well enough to detect when there may be a problem.

A veterinarian must know what is "normal" for a Frenchie. For example, review of a radiograph of a Frenchie with back pain could lead a doctor to assume that the pain was from the hemivertebrae when it may more likely be from a disc injury or trauma. Another example is an inexperienced doctor may assume nasal congestion is from stenotic nares, when it could likely be from an infected tooth or sinusitis. Lastly is the potential misdiagnosis of glaucoma, as Frenchies tend to have higher intraocular pressures than most dogs.

Once you know what normal is for a Frenchie, you can then begin to diagnose and treat problems. As Frenchie veterinarians we have to be prepared to do caesarean sections, manage brachycephalic syndrome, monitor for orthopedic problems and manage skin and food allergies. There is always the concern about appropriate use of anesthetic drugs and the anesthesia protocol, as Frenchies

are very sensitive to certain drugs and prone to aspirate after anesthesia. There is no doubt the French Bulldog has special medical needs.

We are always learning more about this wonderful and special breed. When you are looking for a veterinarian be sure to find one with an open mind, one who is willing to listen to you. Be sure your veterinarian understands the intricacies of surgery and anesthesia. If you have any questions or fears that are not addressed do not hesitate to get a second opinion quickly. Be sure to educate yourself and ask questions and know what is normal or abnormal for your pet. And don't be afraid to pursue alternative therapies like acupuncture, chiropractic and Chinese herbs.

At our clinic we strive to provide the best medicine for all of our patients, and do our best to understand the special requirements of some of our breeds like the French Bulldog. Of course it helps that three of us veterinarians at VMC have at least one Frenchie at home! In some of the upcoming issues we will discuss some of the medical problems common to our beloved French Bulldogs. Let us know what you want to read about!



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