

Hi,

I am an adult mom of two suffering with late-onset food allergies. I went into anaphylactic shock from eating egg after I had been eating it all of my life. Thankfully I had access to TWO epi pens as that was what was required to slow down my reaction before the ambulance got me to the hospital (along with IV Benadryl in the ambulance). Since then I have become anaphylactic to dairy, all tree nuts, peanuts and soy. This has changed my life in a terrifying way. I am constantly living in fear every time I leave my house because I am anaphylactic through touch as well. Lysol wipes have become my best friend. I can no longer eat out in restaurants. I have yet to travel in an airplane since my diagnosis because of my fear of having a reaction in the air. This is so hard for me, because I am from Barbados but live in Canada. I am unable to travel to see my parents and sister in Barbados because the flight is almost six hours and having a reaction in-flight is a very real possibility for me.

This has become such a huge problem and a scary reality for so many millions of people, and appropriate measures need to be in place regardless of the type of travel. This means that across every type of travel there needs to be consistent staff training and education on the signs, symptoms and treatment of anaphylaxis and there need to be protocols in place to accommodate passengers with food allergies. Epi pens need to be available across all modes of travel - on all flights, trains and public stations. I also believe they need to be available in all restaurants.

Air travel poses a particular risk. Just like we are restricted on bringing fluids and sharp objects on flights to protect the safety of lives, we should be able to restrict bringing on nuts and other allergens that can be airborne (scent free is the next step) that are also life threatening to those of us with allergies. There need to be buffer zones, pre-boarding for those that need to clean their areas to make them safe, and announcements made that there are people on board that could die if you open a bag of nuts! Protocols in place for an in-air emergency and sufficient Epi pens to get through the length of flight.

People that don't suffer from food allergies sometimes don't take them seriously. Perhaps they think it's just a fad diet, like "gluten free" or "paleo" but I can attest to the fact that this is naive and extremely untrue. I have to fear for my life any time I am exposed to my allergens. Every reaction is different and could be more severe. I think my life is as important as anyone else's and I should be able to fly home to visit my family without worrying that I will become anaphylactic because the passenger next to me needs to snack on some nuts. There are lots of other options out there and if it becomes policy, people will adjust to it just like they do to other rules that are set for travel.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Christine Witlox

