

My daughter has anaphylaxis. Please consider the following input as you consider how to improve safety for people with allergies on air transport:

1. So-called “buffer zones” on airplanes can cause more harm than good, in my view, for the following reasons:

- Common areas such as bathrooms, and top of seats where passengers touch as they walk become contaminated with allergens.
- Seats are generally cleaned quickly and poorly between flights, and areas within “buffer zones” may have contaminate trays, etc., and buffer zones switch from flight to flight, depending on where the person with allergy is sitting
- Common allergens (packaged nuts, sesame snacks etc.) are still sold on these flights
- Buffer zones are ineffective at keeping allergens away from those with allergies. They are more harmful than they are helpful, as they may provide the allergy sufferer a false sense of security, which can be extremely dangerous for an anaphylactic.
- Bottom Line: Buffer zones are terrible policy for airlines and should be discouraged.

2. Airlines should be forbidden from actively providing or selling certain common allergens

- I recognize that some meals contain allergens, and that this is very difficult to regulate.
- At the same time, it would be very easy to stop serving certain allergens. These include: loose complementary nuts in business class (Air Canada), and packaged nuts for sale. Because nut oils have a very high viscosity (they are oily and sticky), and they are eaten with the fingers, the risk for accidental contamination and cross-contamination is very high, due to contaminated tray tables, door handles, etc. Even a flight attendant serving loose nuts and then serving a drink to another passenger can create life-threatening risks.
- There are literally thousands of alternative snack options airlines could offer.
- Given the risk-reward profile it is stunning that airlines refuse to take this simple step. (risk=death. Reward=passenger lives, and other passengers have potato chips or raisins instead of cashews.... Is it really even worth debating??)

3. Training

- We have flown dozens of times, and flight crew vary hugely in their knowledge and ability to manage allergies among their passengers. We have had well-informed, caring staff, and we have had crew that was entirely ignorant of their own policies, and were rude and dismissive of passenger allergies. Proper training is a must.

Air Canada in particular is misguided in its allergen policies. It would be very easy – and come at very little disruption or inconvenience – for the airline to become more allergen-friendly for those suffering nut allergies. My daughter is rightfully concerned about flying.... Having an anaphylactic attack at 35,000 feet in a thin metal tube that is hours from medical care is a terrifying and life-threatening prospect... Being unable to breathe properly and praying the effect of your epi-pens will last until you can land.... Feeling your throat constrict before you touch down. But to some people, maybe that's not as important as ensuring those in business class have their complementary loose cashews.

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