

Hello,

I have a 9 year old boy with an anaphylactic allergy to peanuts. He also has other allergies to foods that are not anaphylactic. My husband travels by plane, and ferry weekly for work. In order for my son to spend time with him we will often follow him on work trips. As well my entire family and friend support network is in Ontario and we live in BC.

Travelling is a big part of our lives by plane, sky train, bus, sea bus, ferry We never know what to expect or if the people working will be in anyway helpful. Usually when we explain my sons allergies we get the response "*we cannot guarantee*". There is often anxiety in the person's voice and complete uncertainty and it seems a desire to make sure we know we must take responsibility. Trust me we do take responsibility and part of it is to inform staff. We don't care that you cannot guarantee, we care what your protocols are to make him safe and that you are doing them.

Recently getting on a plane we realized the seat in front of us had a spill of roasted peanuts under it. The spot where my son was putting his bag. I informed the steward. Getting the "*I cannot guarantee we can get it all up*". Not sure what to do so I offered to clean it myself and asked for a bag or glove to cover my hand so I could get as much as possible (there was no brush or anything available). He gave me a glove and a wet cloth. He was than kind enough to inform the rows around us that my son has a peanut allergy and they needed to avoid eating anything with peanuts. He even offered to the person next to me who had peanuts as a snack to substitute a snack for free. He explained he was setting up a buffer zone. Only one other time had staff set up a buffer zone when we informed them. That time the young women beside me had mixed nuts as her snack and I purchased her a substitute snack.

On ferries we get the big lecture every time about how *they cannot guarantee*. Again I let them know there should be appropriate accommodations made. If they bring over staff that are informed those staff are not anxious, they just inform me of protocols in place and all is good. One time we were on the Discovery Coast Connector ferry. The first hour of a nine hour trip I purchased food. I spoke with the staff they were unsure what was safe so I asked them to bring out the box for the chicken nuggets so I could read it (we had been travelling for over a week so my supply was low, I needed to purchase food). The label assured me it would be ok. So I ordered the nuggets. I grabbed barbeque sauce for me (staff did not have an ingredient list, not one on box either) and used ketchup from my supplies for my son. My son was 3 at the time he accidently dipped the nugget in the sauce, since the sauce did not have an ingredient list I grabbed it away but in the process it did touch the side of his cheek. I quickly wiped it away but his cheek had blistered severely already and continued to get worse. We notified the staff it was a horrible ride, I was so scared the entire time. Thank god he had not actually ingested it. Why there was a product on a public ferry system with no ingredient list beyond my comprehension!!!! A chef trained in allergies would never order products that did not contain an ingredient list. Needless to say I no longer eat bbq sauce that does not have an ingredient list.

If transportation staff is not trained about protocol around food can I really trust they would have access to or know how to use an epipen if ever needed?

Please train all staff on food safety, the signs of anaphylactic, how to use and epipen and keep epipen accessible on all public transportation. It could save a life. It could save my only child's life!

Jo-Anne Nadort
Mother
Frequent Traveller