

Public input on how to accommodate passengers with food allergies:

Life-threatening food allergies (anaphylaxis) and air travel:

I recommend that airlines do not serve foods containing Health Canada's Priority Food Allergens, such as tree nuts, peanuts and sesame.

I am anaphylactic to nuts and seeds. When I fly I always bring my own food, my EpiPens, and am very careful regarding cleanliness.

Two years ago, while flying home to Canada from England, an Air Canada flight attendant was preparing to heat nuts in the galley immediately beside my seat in the Economy section of the aircraft as the oven in Business Class was broken. I asked her politely (I am a middle-aged soft-spoken librarian) if she could please heat the nuts elsewhere, as I have a life-threatening allergy and was worried about having an allergic reaction to the heated nut particles in such close proximity. She was extremely rude to me, and refused to accommodate my request. A second flight attendant, having overheard this exchange, approached me immediately after she left, and assured me that he would take steps to mitigate the situation. I was most grateful that he did so as who knows what would have happened otherwise. Had the airline not be serving nuts, this need never have been an issue.

I recognize that it is impossible to eliminate the risk of exposure to all possible allergens to all people, and as someone at risk for anaphylaxis I take great responsibility for my own safety. That risk however, is magnified greatly in an enclosed aircraft at 30,000 feet in the air. So much of that risk could be greatly mitigated for so many allergic travelers by requiring the airlines to avoid serving priority allergy items such as nuts, peanuts and sesame.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide input.

Yours sincerely,

Judith Cooperman