

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on passengers travelling on modes of transportation governed by the Canadian Transportation Agency.

My son has a severe peanut allergy that we have been helping him manage for 21 years. We fly annually from Toronto to Vancouver as well as doing a few flights overseas.

We have had good experiences over the years with these flights. We have flown several commercial airlines and find Westjet has an excellent policy on managing food allergies.

When we book the flight we inquire with the airline about their policy. What do they serve as snacks? What is their policy in terms of training staff to prevent and manage an anaphylactic passenger? Is their on board food service accommodating for food allergies? How can we help provide the necessary information they need to ensure a safe flight? We then include a special note about the allergy upon booking and request a special meal if offered. If not, we bring our own food on board for him. We confirm the allergy upon checking in and at the departure desk. We also confirm with the airline staff when boarding. Westjet makes an on board announcement that a passenger has a severe nut allergy and if everyone could please refrain from eating personal snacks with nuts. A staff member approaches my son and confirms the allergy and asks if he is carrying eipipens. They then alert the buffer zone passengers - I believe it is the row in front, behind and adjacent to his row.

We have always felt that he is responsible for managing his food allergy but always fly with an airline that has policy and procedures in place to manage a food allergic person and to provide emergency care if needed. It is a partnership with the airline.

It is reasonable to ask all airlines to follow a similar policy. We do not have experience travelling on trains and buses but believe those modes of transportation should follow a similar strategy. When our son was ten we travelled on a cruise to Alaska with Celebrity Cruise Lines that was very accommodating to his peanut allergy.

Since anaphylaxis has become increasingly common, it makes sense to initiate and pass a policy to protect passengers with severe food allergies on all modes of transportation. Passengers must take responsibility to notify the airline, train, bus or ship company and take the lead in managing their food allergy in partnership with the airline, bus, train or ship.

The Canadian Transportation Agency can greatly influence the safety of many travellers by passing legislation to protect anaphylactic passengers.

Sincerely,

Karen Danard
Mississauga, Ontario

