

To the Canadian Transportation Agency,

As a young professional Canadian with anaphylaxis, I want to explain why safe travel options are so crucial for people with life-threatening allergies.

As a 30 -year old college graduate, I have travelled often for both personal and professional purposes. I have encountered many frightening challenges in air travel with my severe, life-threatening allergies to nuts, challenges that were not necessary or acceptable. Major Canadian airlines such as Air Canada have policies which are inconsistent, unaccommodating, and unsafe regarding the handling of allergies on flights. For example, On three different occasions, I have been assured over the phone with Air Canada, and even by Customer Service Managers before my flight that nuts would not be served on board my flight, and I should have no concerns boarding my flight. However, the reality upon boarding was something else entirely. On these multiple occasions, I was told only at the last minute while boarding and on the plane, that nuts would in fact be served, and that my disease would not be accommodated. Due to the enclosed environment of an airplane, the recirculated air, and lack of medical support, air travel can be especially dangerous for a person with anaphylaxis. Although there is no way to regulate what food individual passengers may bring on board, it is much more important that the crew are not serving all passengers snacks of nuts. The risk is increased ten-fold when all passengers are served nuts, and in fact makes it unsafe for a person with severe allergies to travel under these conditions. Many, many people with anaphylaxis (in addition to myself) have experienced similar treatment by Air Canada and other carriers, and there have been a number of cases where this has resulted in serious reactions, thousands of feet in the air.

This is not acceptable, and is also discriminatory, infringing on the rights of Canadians with anaphylaxis to have access to safe air travel options. What makes it even worse is the fact of how simple it is for airlines to substitute a multitude of other nut-free snack options in place of nuts, especially considering the growing number of Canadians who are allergic to nuts. West Jet is a perfect example. This airline does not serve nuts on any of their flights, and even takes extra precautions (such as an announcement requesting passengers to refrain from eating nuts) to make travel safe for their allergic customers. Similar accommodations need to be made mandatory, and required of all Canadian airlines, to ensure that every Canadian has access to safe, equitable air travel options. Therefore, I am writing to ask that the Canadian Transportation Agency take action on this issue, and require all Canadian airlines to accommodate passengers with serious nut allergies, and refrain from serving nuts on their flights. This is a life or death matter, and no allergic person should have to risk their life to travel.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Liane Germaine