

I am writing to share my view that there should be appropriate accommodations made on all modes of transportation for people with food allergies, including consistent staff training and education, and having protocols in place to manage food allergies.

I am especially concerned with air travel. I believe the accommodations on air travel should be stronger given the time/distance from accessible emergency treatment. Epi-pens do not cure an anaphylactic reaction, they only buy a short amount of time to seek proper emergency treatment. Epi-pens do not buy enough time to land a plane.

I do not think one "row" for a buffer zone is adequate. Allergens do not travel sideways along the pattern of a "row". It would be more appropriate to define an area, for example, within 10 feet of the disabled passenger. Or, in more practical terms, one or two seats beside, one or two seats in front of, and one or two seats behind the allergic passenger which would create an actual buffer.

I have a son with a very sensitive allergy to peanuts and all tree nuts. Travelling by plane makes us extremely anxious as there are so many factors out of our control that we cannot address despite our best efforts. We always wipe down his seat, always travel with our own food and always bring spare snacks for the passengers who sit near us so we can offer them a replacement for their own snacks if they had nuts. We always travel with several Epi-pens. Still the variability of how we are treated by the airlines is frightening. We never know if we will be asked not to fly, told they will serve nuts, refused pre-boarding to wipe seats, or refused a buffer zone. Consistency would be a huge help. It would be a significant improvement in our travelling experience to know we can expect well-trained staff from the reservation agent to the departure lounge staff to the flight attendants.

In our case, regardless of a "buffer zone", we cannot travel on a plane where the flight attendants serve nuts openly to most passenger - for example, handing out bags of peanuts, or in first class small bowls of warm mixed nuts. We struggle to determine which airlines are available to us though. When we phone to make a reservation, the customer service agents typically do not know what type of food will be served. Often they can't tell us if the flight crew will be distributing nuts. This is very frustrating as we can't even make an informed choice about which airline to choose. It would be helpful if new training requirement extended to reservations agents.

This obviously wasn't part of the options you considered.....but why not just ask airlines to not serve nuts? As your paper correctly concludes, airlines cannot accommodate every type of food allergy they encounter. Nut allergies are clearly documented as the most prevalent and the most commonly life-threatening. So if you can isolate nut allergies as a special case, why not just ask airlines not to serve nuts? That doesn't mean making sure all food is safe for nut allergic passengers to eat. It doesn't mean avoiding foods with traces of nuts, or cross-contaminated with nuts, etc. It just means not handing out bags of nuts to every passenger on a plane, or little bowls of warm nuts to every

passenger in first class. We are not asking airlines to make food safe for my son to eat. He would never risk eating it anyway. We are just asking airlines not to permeate the airplane cabin environment with a substance that is deadly to so many people.