

Dear Committee Members,

I am the Mother of a 9 year old son with multiple life threatening food allergies. Not all will result in anaphylaxis but his peanut and tree nut allergies will and have. He is extremely sensitive and feels nauseous just being in the room with nuts. His Allergist has taught him this is his bodies way of protecting himself. I have witnessed two anaphylactic reactions in his short life and I do not wish to see another. Our family is vigilante in keeping him safe but we also need help in doing so. I worry about him every time we travel but I don't want to raise him to be afraid to see the world. I believe that appropriate accommodations should be available on all modes of transportation for people with food allergies. He deserves the right to travel freely and feel safe doing so. Other passengers deserve to travel without worrying about his safety or what they may witness as well.

For these reasons, I believe it should be common across all forms of travel to have consistent staff training, education, and protocols in place to manage passenger (and staff) allergies. Often times when we travel by air, the flight attendant asks if we would like to inform the passengers around us of his allergies. Sometimes this is by announcement but once we were "given permission" to do it ourselves "if we felt it was necessary". In my opinion, with proper training and protocols, this question should never have been asked. If they are aware that a passenger on the flight has a life threatening allergy, there should be a common procedure across the board that goes in to place. My son should not have to be singled out and have his seat announced to feel safe while traveling. He should not have to hear other passengers blame him for the inconvenience of having to put their bag of peanuts away for their 1 hour flight. This should not be the responsibility of a 9 year old boy (or his family for that matter) and I fear there are other families that take unnecessary risks to avoid the stigma. An allergy is not something to be ashamed of. It is a medical condition. It is also a miniscule part of who my son is and if handled correctly should never hinder his ability to live a full life. No person should be put in the position of deciding if a flight is worth risking their safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Stacey Brown-Rousson

Aaron's Mom