

Dear Sharon,

I am only one person in this huge world of ours, dealing and living with, a severe anaphylactic tree nut allergy. This condition hit me just after the death of my beautiful mother and working within a business that my manager, was verbally rude to me on a daily basis.

Confidence was lost in many areas.. and that is another story. While under duress stress of the loss of my mom, I went to work one day without having a drink of water, nothing to eat.. when one of the other managers approached me later in the day at 4pm with an ice cream - a Nestle drumstick, I accepted his kindness and began to consume it quickly as I had things to do. Only to notice when halfway through the ice cream, the ice milk turned yellowish.. I felt nauseous right away, and had some symptoms within my mouth and tongue not ever felt, my heart started to race and I completely felt unwell within only a matter of minutes. At first, due to some packages I was working with that had a fine white dust on them, I thought maybe it was anthrax as there had been warnings of that on the news, so I thought that at first was what the issue was. I lived only a few minutes drive away from the office, so I told them I felt unwell, and left in a hurry to get home. When there, I was greeted by my daughter at the front door, whom gasped when she first saw me. At that point of time I had no clue what I looked like. I just sputtered to her to turn away, starting taking off my clothes still thinking that it was anthrax, and ran up to my bathroom suite in the bedroom to jump into the shower. When in the shower I felt so uncomfortable, and saw welts that looked like huge hives raising my skin and my body turned into a swollen red color.. I tried to drink the water from the shower as it poured over me but had trouble swallowing and my heart was irregular.. I could hardly catch my breath. I then realized it was worse, and perhaps I was having a food allergy .. my mind was racing.. it was a horrible experience and ride I was on with my body. I got out of the shower fast and tried to put on the clothes around me, but had to get to the closet and find something baggier as things were not fitting like they would normally .. by then which this all happened within less than 5 minutes.. I heard the front door open and my husband Jim arrived home earlier than normal thankfully and I could hear our daughter Nicole in a panic voice speaking of what she witnessed when I first got home. I was already heading down the stairs to have him take me to the hospital for I felt that I was going to pass out and things were terrible that I was experiencing. There is a medical office just around the corner from our home, and as he was driving me to the hospital I pointed to the clinic and he took me inside as quick as he could. The doctor there, put me in his back room and after looking at me for a few moments, said we were witnessing a food allergy and he wanted me to take a pill that to me felt like a horse size pill as it lodged in my throat. He left me and my husband in the room alone for quite awhile, or at least it felt that way. I rode the storm and it was a rough one. I saw my life pass in front of me.. and all I could think of was I was not going to make it to see our beautiful girls marry, and have children, nor would I be there for my husband. I felt like I was dying.. it was a horrible experience. The doctor came back in the room and said, for me to lie still.. I was there for over 2 hours. What needed to be done which I learned after the fact, was

this doctor needed to call an ambulance and I needed an epinephrine shot. If I had had that.. this terrible anaphylactic allergy I now have may not have been as bad. My husband and I trusted that since I was within a medical facility I would have been taken great care of.. yet .. what needed to be done.. was not.. so here I am today with this food allergy.

Stress in peoples lives according to the allergen specialist I saw for my diagnoses cause a prime conditioning for these kinds of food allergys to occur. I was stressed with the loss of my mom.. and I was stressed working for a verbally abusive manager. I fell into a pit of struggle ..

It saddened me to learn I will not ever overcome this allergy to tree nuts. I can't believe how many items, not just food products, but cosmetics, hand soap, etc.. that have tree nut oils, etc within them, including certain medications for manufacturers use nut powders to hold the chemicals together. There are so many many things out there that have tree nuts in them and the labels are not stating clearly they are within the product. It is unbelievable..

I had no clue what food allergies did internally to people before this happened to me. I had no idea it can lead to heart failure, lung failure, liver failure, kidney failure.. no clue! I thought it was just hives.

I have been told that if this occurs to me again.. I have a 50 50 chance of survival .. they may or may not be able to resuscitate me, that I could have kidney or liver failure. it is pretty scary..

I am now 58 years young.. this does not just happen to the babys and young children in the world. . and when they are younger, they have a better chance of possibly outgrowing it. I was hit with that just before I turned 40 years of age. I have been dealing with this now for 18 years of my life..while I count my blessings.. food allergies is a terrible crutch for many of us.

So I speak for not just myself.. but for the countless others that need your help.

Many people .. do not understand the severity of food allergies. Unless you live it yourself.. you are completely ignorant to just what happens.. and the scariness of it .. and how it impacts not just you, but those in your own circle.

Without governments The Canadian Food Allergy Board, and even in the USA, FARE - are not able to truly help people like me. I may be 58 years young.. but I am still needing help and that is why I am writing to you today.

I have often wondered why is that many food products, medicines, cosmetic products have to contain nuts within them.. what can the government do to accommodate passengers with food allergies in all areas of travel: air, ferry, rail, and bus relax better?

When drafting new federal regulations please try to take a walk amongst those of us that do live with food allergies to gain a higher better understanding to the severity of our concerns. Educate businesses from the brass positioning first and then have that trickle to those that we take mercy within to not only keep it safe for those not inflicted with this type of problem, but rather all of us. Don't leave us out of that realm.

what accommodations should be made across all modes of transportation for people with food allergies - it is hard to just go into one area, for there are 9 other top allergens to worry about. Yet the ones that have a small fine particle issue such as tree nuts or peanuts, I believe need to be eliminated from the shelves, from the restaurants.. . from the menus. Food producers, manufacturers of edible products need to be regulated with higher standards.. When I am on the ferry heading over to the island, even to walk outside around the decks there are people whom have allergies to smoke, that have their oxygen tanks with them.. people that are being allowed to have their cigarettes on the one side of the ferry, then walk inside, smelling like a cigarette and passing by those that have a terrible breathing allergy to cigarettes.. that does not make any sense to me.

Higher regulations need to be put into place.. and the government is whom can help with that.

There MUST 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.

It is a huge worry for my husband and family to travel with me knowing I have sever food allergies - when travelling in a plane heading to Winnipeg one year, there were nuts being served - almonds, and I started to feel sick, so lucky for me I had a bag that I put over my nose and mouth and breathed inside of that to avoid the circulated air with these fine particles floating around me for the whole trip while being up 35,000 feet in the air heading to be with my brother and wife for their 25th wedding anniversary. It is scary! Going for a trip across to the island of Vancouver on board a ship that I have seen nut packages in their vending machines is scary .. if I touch where that person touched along a railing, and forget myself placing my hand on my face.. I break into a hive rash automatically, it is crazy but true.. We went on the train in Fort

Edmonton park for a day trip and there were people on board with bags of nuts.. it only takes one sneeze, one cough to make them airborne..

I can only imagine those with food allergies on any type of transportation mode, such as bus, trains, planes, ferrys, taxis, etc trying to make their way home for a visit from university or family gathering.

What would make me and my family feel safer when travelling? Higher regulations being put into place by you, my government.. working with food manufacturers and producers no matter where they are in the world, to make sure no cross contamination occurs..

Please be there for us all! we are at your mercy! and our lives - depend on you!!

Don't rely on a warning becoming reality because someone within their food processing or while behind counters serving food, or vending machines having residue of nuts spill out over on the other packages within their machine - don't wait til people fall ill due to this carelessness bending rules that caused someone to choke, become hospitalized, and die if being assisted too late.. we only have 15 minutes to receive help when experiencing this kind of terrible thing..

We matter!

Please take strides to do what it takes to protect all Canadians.. even those with food allergies, or one with whom also experiences any of the top ten allergens.. and ban cigarette smoking from all vessels..

again.. we are at your mercy.. please show we matter.. do what is right for all of us.. and do not segregate us from the crowd..

in kind regards,

in gratitude for reading my letter..

I remain..

sincerely..

Sharon Croome