



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **TOO AFRAID TO TRAVEL: NEW FOOD ALLERGY TRAVEL HUB SUPPORTS AUSSIES TO OVERCOME FEARS AND HOLIDAY WITH INCREASED SAFETY**

**Food Allergy Week – Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May to Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025**

Travel fears are stopping Australians living with food allergy in their tracks with a recent survey revealing 99% of respondents experienced travel anxiety and three in four (76%) actively avoid travel due to potential allergy risks.<sup>1</sup>

The high levels of travel anxiety were revealed by a recent Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia Travelling with Food Allergy survey. The responses from 543 people living with food allergy or their parents or carers, showed:

- Almost all (99%) of respondents found travelling with a food allergy caused stress and worry, and more than half (56%) said plane travel caused 'a lot' of added fear.
- Three in four (76%) had actively avoided travel because of food allergy concerns, while one in four (27%) avoided travel most or all the time.
- A third (35%) reported they had a mild, moderate or severe allergic reaction while travelling, of these 42% went to hospital and 36% had adrenaline.
- Of the reactions described, the vast majority (69%) occurred when eating out.<sup>1</sup>

In response to the new data, national patient support organisation Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia is launching an Australian-first, dedicated [Food Allergy Travel Hub](#) to help 1.5 million Australians living with food allergy<sup>2</sup>, and their families, to travel with more confidence and increased safety.

The free online hub provides evidence-based resources that address the most common questions and concerns, whether travelling locally, interstate or overseas. This includes airline policy comparisons, translated chef cards to advise hospitality staff of allergens, advice for travelling with adrenaline (epinephrine) devices, and check lists for everything from travel insurance to caravanning, cruising and overseas school trips.

According to Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia CEO Maria Said AM, we don't want people living with food allergy, and their families, missing out on important milestones, trips and holidays because of travel fears.

"With the number of Australians travelling exceeding pre-COVID levels, we have seen an increase in calls from people anxiously searching for information on travelling with food allergy, especially to popular destinations such as Japan," stated Maria.

"Our new **Food Allergy Travel Hub** has been designed to provide the support and confidence people need to plan well, eat smart and travel safe. While the risk is always there, taking precautions, such as always carrying two adrenaline devices, always reading food labels, telling anyone preparing food for you about your food allergy and taking your own food on the plane, can help to create a safer travel experience and ensure people are prepared to manage an allergic reaction, if one occurs."

Sydney mum Shirley Lay-Yee understands the fear firsthand. She is the mother of two daughters with food allergies, including 21-year-old Paris, who has experienced three medical emergencies of potentially life-threatening anaphylaxis.

“As a parent of children with food allergy, you always worry about them, it can take over everything in your life and it can be quite debilitating – the anxiety is always there, especially when it comes to travelling,” said Shirley.

Last year, Paris travelled to Korea, her first overseas trip without her parents. She had experienced an allergic reaction after eating out at a popular fast-food restaurant. “My face and body flared up with welts, my throat was itchy and I felt really hot,” said Paris. “It was scary, and I was very anxious, but I had planned well and was able to manage the allergic reaction.”

“Before the trip, I spent hours searching online for advice. I was on Reddit, Quora, and all these forums trying to find information about travelling with food allergy. The new Food Allergy Travel Hub would have made planning so much easier.”

Research supports the benefits of travel planning.<sup>3</sup> The [international study](#) on flying with food allergy found the incidence of mid-air allergic reactions were ‘uncommon’ and the rate of allergic reactions had not increased in 30 years, despite more passengers and more people living with food allergy flying.<sup>3</sup> Researchers attributed this, in part, to people with food allergies taking precautions when travelling.<sup>3</sup>

“Our survey also found only a small number of people reported allergic reactions while flying - 12 out of 543 people (2%), and none administered their adrenaline. We hope this shows people are following appropriate advice and taking their own food on the plane. It is one of the most important steps to lowering allergy risk,” stated Maria.

The Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia Travelling with Food Allergy survey found the vast majority (69%) of allergic reactions occurred when eating out. It also showed 54% of reactions had taken place in Australia, compared to 46% overseas.

Dr Sandra Vale, CEO for the [National Allergy Council](#) said it was an important reminder to not be complacent when travelling for work or holidaying at home.

“Use Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia chef cards and always tell hospitality staff about your food allergy, it could help prevent a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction,” said Dr Vale.

“I also urge food service owners to ensure all staff complete the National Allergy Council’s free [All about Allergens](#) online food service training courses. Just like responsible service of alcohol, it is a vital step towards keeping customers safe, whether they are on holiday or if they are your regulars.”

Australia has one of the highest rates of food allergies and hospital anaphylaxis admissions in the world.<sup>4</sup> Food Allergy Week was created by Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia to raise awareness of food allergy in Australia. This Food Allergy Week (Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May to Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025) will focus on allergy safe travel and encourages people to ‘**plan well, eat smart and travel safe**’.

The new Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia **Food Allergy Travel Hub** can be found at [www.allergyfacts.org.au/travel](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au/travel) . More Food Allergy Week information and educational travel content can be found on A&AA’s website [www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au), Instagram [@allergicaustralia](#), Facebook [@AnaphylaxisAustralia](#), LinkedIn [@allergy-anaphylaxis-australia](#) and YouTube [@AAIvideo](#).

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*Issued on behalf of Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia and the National Allergy Council*

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**Available for interviews:**

- Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia CEO Maria Said AM
- National Allergy Council CEO Dr Sandra Vale (PhD)
- Case studies Shirley and Paris Lay Yee

**Note to editors:**

A food allergy occurs when a person's immune system reacts to substances in the environment that are harmless to most people. These substances are known as allergens. Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction and is potentially life threatening. Many allergic reactions are mild or moderate. Allergic symptoms including anaphylaxis may occur very soon after eating or most often within 20 minutes to 2 hours after eating.

The most common food allergens are egg, milk, peanut, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, soy, sesame and wheat.

**About the Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia Travelling with Food Allergy survey.** This database survey was conducted in May 2025. Respondents included 543 people living with food allergy, as well as parents or carers of a person living with a food allergy. Most respondents (75%) had multiple food allergies or were parents or carers of someone with multiple food allergies. The most common food allergies reported were peanut and tree nuts.

**About Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia** Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia is a registered charity and patient support organisation that aims to improve awareness of allergy in the community through education, advocacy and support. Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia has a wide range of educational materials and resources and operates the National Allergy Helpline. Part of an international alliance of like-minded organisations, Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia works closely with the peak medical body, the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA).

**About the National Allergy Council.** The National Allergy Council is a partnership between the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) and Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia. The National Allergy Council aims to reduce the impact of allergies on the Australian community and health system through implementing the National Allergy Strategy. The National Allergy Council's [All about Allergens online training](#), developed in consultation with key stakeholders and users of the course, provides nationally standardised best-practice training for all people working in food service. The National Allergy Council's [Allergy 250K website](#) provides support to the 250,000 young Australians living with severe allergies.

**References**

1. A&AA travelling with food allergy survey, May 2025. Database survey conducted among 543 respondents of people living with food allergy, as well as parents or carers of a person living with a food allergy. When providing information about any allergic reactions while travelling, respondents who had experienced multiple reactions were asked to describe the most severe reaction.
2. ABS [Health Conditions Prevalence](#), 2022
3. Turner et al. 2023. How Common Are Allergic Reactions During Commercial Flights? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice*. (In Press) DOI: 10.1016/j.jaip.2023.07.025. [Open Access](#).
4. <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/newsroom/latest-news/national-standard-care-anaphylaxis-will-save-lives>