

SPECIAL EDITION

MAY IS FOOD ALLERGY AWARENESS MONTH!

- If you are a teen living with food allergies, life can be difficult to manage at times. This edition of The Clipper is for you!
- Be sure to check out [whyriskit.ca](http://whyriskit.ca) for more information!
- Listen for announcements next year for the NEW Food Allergy Club!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Dating With Allergies 2

Eating Out With Allergies 2

Sabrina Shannon Memorial Award 3

Explaining Allergies to Friends 3

# The Clipper

LIVING WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

## FOOD ALLERGIES CAN KILL

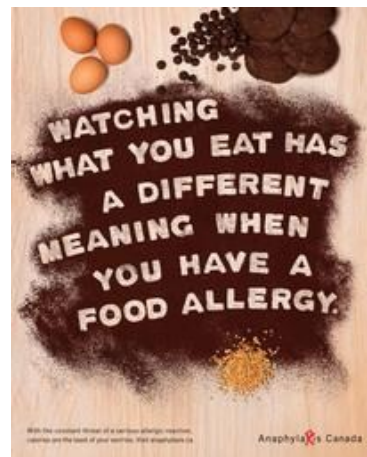
### Letter from the Editor

By Hannah Lank

As a teen living with food allergies, I know that life can be difficult to manage at times. Eating out, partying, hanging out with friends, and dating are a little more challenging when you have a food allergy. Of course, some of us are allergic to more foods than others, and some aren't allergic to anything at all. Personally, I know what it's like to suffer from a life-threatening nut allergy. Life-threatening allergies are referred to as anaphylaxis, a word which scares many people. The truth is, food allergies aren't as hard to manage as you might think. Some people don't understand how it is possible to live life without eating nuts, or without wheat or milk or eggs. But anything is possible, and you

learn to manage your life with limitations. Food allergies shouldn't hold you back from travel, dating, or enjoying life, but you do have to keep them in mind for everything you do. Whether or not you've had a food allergy all your life or have just been diagnosed, it is important to realize that allergies are simply a bump in the road: not a blockade. As a part of Anaphylaxis Canada's Youth Advisory Panel, I have met other teenagers from across the country who suffer from food allergies as unusual as beef and mustard seed to those as common as peanuts and tree nuts. Together, we have created the website [whyriskit.ca](http://whyriskit.ca), which is a database for allergic teens to gain information on managing their aller-

gies. We're always looking for new members, so if you have a food allergy, be sure to check us out! The thing is, even if you don't have an allergy, chances are you know someone who does, and it's important that you have the right information so you can properly manage yourself around that person. Hopefully, those of us who are anaphylactic can learn something from this issue, and maybe manage our food allergies a little more carefully.



# Dating with Deadly Allergies



My last boyfriend and I had been dating for almost a year, when one night we went out to dinner at a Greek restaurant. About half way through the meal, my

throat started to feel quite itchy. I started to avoid the food that I thought was causing the reaction – and my boyfriend started to ask how I had gone from absolutely starving to barely eating a thing. I didn't want him to freak out, so I told him I had filled up on garlic bread, and I tried to take some anti-histamine pills without him noticing. I was embarrassed about having an allergic reaction. I started picturing the scene in my head – telling my boyfriend I was having a reaction, the panic, the auto-injector, everybody at the restaurant staring as an ambulance was called. I *did not* want that to happen! Even as we

left the restaurant, I could feel my throat closing more and more, as the medicine was not kicking in. I still kept quiet, popping anti-histamines like they were candy and praying that my reaction would stop.

Luckily, I started to feel a bit better and eventually fell asleep in the car from all of the anti-histamines that I had consumed. Afterwards, I told my boyfriend that I had had a reaction at the restaurant. He was very upset that I had not told him while it was happening, and he made me promise that I would tell him anytime I felt the slightest bit off.

Looking back on the situation now, I realize just how irresponsible I was for keeping my mouth shut. I could have died, but I didn't say anything to save myself

embarrassment and the drama of causing a scene. Since then, I have responded very differently in similar situations. Now, whenever I feel the smallest hint of a reaction, I am much more comfortable telling others what is going on to make them aware of the situation.

If you ever find yourself in this scenario, whether it be with someone you are dating or even other friends, *don't* be embarrassed by your allergies! Nobody wants to cause a scene or make others panic, but it is your life at risk, and that is a very serious matter. Put your safety and health first, calmly explain to others how you are feeling and how they can help, and be prepared to use your epinephrine auto-injector. People are a lot more understanding than you might think, and you will feel a lot better knowing that others are there to help!

“I was embarrassed about having an allergic reaction”

## Eating Out Tips for the Allergic Teen

If you have food allergies, it may be a good idea to visit a restaurant where they can make certain substitutions. One of the disadvantages of fast-food restaurants is that they have standardized food that often cannot be altered upon request.

When you get to a new restaurant, make sure to explain your allergies clearly and remind them of cross contamination. You may want to double check for

specific items that you are ordering.

It's a good idea to speak to the manager just to make sure that they can accommodate your allergies. They are likely used to having allergic guests and should be able to inform you of what is safe and what isn't.

If you know a restaurant is safe for you, keep going back there but remember to double check what you're ordering every time as ingre-

dients and recipes may change. If you and your friends are going out for dinner, try to suggest somewhere that you know is okay for you.



# Sabrina Shannon (1990-2003) Memorial Award

Have you raised awareness and educated others about life-threatening allergies? Are you looking for ways to pay for next year's tuition? If so, then we have some great news for you!

**Anaphylaxis Canada is now accepting applications for the 2013 Sabrina Shannon Memorial Award!**

Anaphylaxis Canada will be granting **two awards of \$1,000** each to students entering their first year or continuing their studies at a post-secondary institution.

This award recognizes the important role that youth play in raising awareness and educating others about life-threatening

allergies. It is dedicated to the life of **Sabrina Shannon, an inspiring teenager who died at age 13 after eating French fries from her school cafeteria,** which contained trace elements of her allergen. Since her passing, Sabrina's parents and other members of the allergy community have kept Sabrina's spirit alive by advocating for safer schools and communities across Canada.

This award has been funded through the generous support of TD Securities.

**To apply, submit the following by JUNE 21, 2013:**

A completed application form (download below)  
A 500-1500 word essay, describing your efforts to raise awareness and educate others about life-threatening allergies  
Contact information for two references

Visit the webpage for the award at [www.whyriskit.ca](http://www.whyriskit.ca).

## The Sabrina Shannon Memorial Award

For Youth Raising Awareness for Life-Threatening Allergies



## Explaining Allergies to Your Friends

Personally, I find whenever I begin to become friends with someone and inform them about my allergies, there are some pretty typical responses. One being: "WHAT DO YOU EAT!?" or another common one being: "So what happens if I eat \_\_\_\_\_ in front of you?" No matter what their questions are, I always answer them since I see it as something positive in that they are showing an interest in trying to understand my allergies. I also take that time to inform them of simple precautions that they can take such as avoiding eating nuts around me. Being in a larger group of friends and explaining allergies can be more intimidating, especially if the attention shifts all of a sudden on you. If you have informed people about your allergies, don't feel pressured to keep talking about your allergies after you have

explained all that you can. Simply change the topic. Personally, I never try to dwell on my allergies more than is necessary. After all, there are many other things I like to talk about! I still find it important to make sure my friends are informed about my allergies.



Even when your friends know about your allergies, they may struggle to fully understanding what you can and can't eat. For things such

as social events where people want to bring food, they may become concerned about bringing food that's allergy friendly. In his situation, I don't just inform people of the foods I can't eat and what they should avoid bringing, but I also inform them of everything I CAN eat and give them as many ideas and options as possible. I also bring my own allergy-free alternatives such as a gluten-free bun to a barbeque or my own cupcake to a birthday. By doing this, not only do you feel more included by eating what everyone else gets to eat (I mean who doesn't want cake at a birthday right!?), but others will also feel better knowing you can eat something too. When it comes to eating out somewhere, be open with your friends about where you can't eat so you don't end up at a restaurant that can't accommodate your allergies. Again, give them options about other places that work for you so that everyone can still make a decision together.

Note: All articles are taken with permission from Anaphylaxis Canada's Youth Advisory Panel. If you are interested in joining the panel, please visit [whyriskit.ca](http://whyriskit.ca) and download the application form! They are always looking for new members.

If you are interested in learning more about the food allergy club, contact The Clipper at [kelvinpaperclip1@gmail.com](mailto:kelvinpaperclip1@gmail.com)

***THANKS FOR READING!***

