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## London mom is online peanut-allergy advocate

**MOTHER LOAD:** Elizabeth Goldenberg uses her website to help push for reforms, like banning nuts from all airline flights

By KATHY RUMLESKI, THE LONDON FREE PRESS

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**Onespot Allergy president and founder Elizabeth Goldenberg with her nine-year-old son, Jacob, who wears an EpiPen belt. (DEREK RUTTAN, The London Free Press)**

Food can be deadly.

So can bee stings.

I know. My uncle Arnold Rumleski died of a bee sting a decade ago this summer.

He didn't know he was allergic to a bee's venom and his death came quickly.

London mom Elizabeth Goldenberg says even though it's distressing to learn your child has a severe allergy, the good news is that you can then educate yourself and prevent contact with the allergen.

Goldenberg is doing everything she can to raise awareness and provide products that may save lives.

Goldenberg, whose son Jacob, 8, has a severe nut allergy, started a website and business -- Onespot Allergy -- a year ago and now has customers as far away as Singapore.

"I never expected that I would grow a community of people dealing with food allergies worldwide. I was a divorce lawyer for 16 years. I didn't realize I'd be an allergy advocate. That's what evolved."

Her latest effort is to get nuts banned from airplanes -- the food, not people, although those kind of nuts should be banned too.

Her son, Jacob, has never been on an airplane and that's because peanuts are routinely handed out as snacks on flights.

Goldenberg says WestJet has voluntarily removed all nut products from its flights and Air Canada is formulating a position on the subject.

She has put a link on her blog to a petition sent to the U.S. Department of Transportation requesting a nut ban.

The department is considering the ban, along with other proposals -- such as a nut-free zone on planes.

Goldenberg says only a total ban is acceptable.

"We know all the servers are touching the bags. Every passenger is eating them. They're touching the hand rests . . . going to the bathrooms.

"They can't digest -- that's an ironic word -- how food can be lethal."

There are more than 1,800 signatures on Goldenberg's petition and she's hoping to have 10,000 by the department's deadline of Sept. 23.

Her video on the subject, explaining why the ban is so important, was picked up by a pediatric website and generated 10,000 views.

Goldenberg is now branching out with her product line to include airline-safety kits for passengers.

About 4.6 million people in the U.S. have peanut and tree-nut allergies and Goldenberg said the number is around 460,000 in Canada. Between 1997 and 2002, the number of children with food allergies doubled and the percentage is highest among children under three.

"They're calling it a peanut-allergy epidemic," Goldenberg says. "The best treatment is avoidance of the allergen 100%. We're far away from understanding this completely."

Goldenberg stresses the importance of having medication, such as an epinephrine injector -- or EpiPen -- always on hand.

"The mission that I have is to keep people and their medication together," she says.

People with severe allergies can be rendered helpless within seconds if they are in contact with the allergen.

"If I were in that situation, where I had no air passage and I was losing consciousness, I wouldn't want to see people running away from me, looking for my medication. I would want to see them running right to me, taking it off my body and giving it to me immediately."

That's why she sells EpiPen belts online.

"Once they have an injector, they don't necessarily realize that it can't be separated from them."

As her customers were also asking for waterproof belts, she now offers them as well.

It doesn't matter where you are -- including at the beach or in a pool -- medication needs to be on the body. The belts she offers are quite discreet.

Goldenberg says she wants to continue to respond to people's needs and help advocate for them.

Her website has become a great tool to do that.

"I'm using it, I hope, to help other people stay safe and to make their lives easier."

'Me time' for moms Single Women in Motherhood (SWIM) is holding its first child-care exchange -- to give moms some "me time" -- this Saturday at the Glen Cairn Community Resource Centre, from noon to 3 p.m. For more information, contact the SWIM office at 519-432-5454.

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**On the web**

[www.onespotallergy.com](http://www.onespotallergy.com)

To sign the petition, got to [www.change.org/petitions/view/banning\\_peanuts\\_from\\_airlines](http://www.change.org/petitions/view/banning_peanuts_from_airlines)

E-mail [kathy.rumleski@sunmedia.ca](mailto:kathy.rumleski@sunmedia.ca), or follow [KathyatLFP](#) on Twitter.

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