



NAPA position statement regarding the new Air Canada pet travel policy

In response to the recent decision regarding pets travelling in cabin on **Air Canada** flights, the National Asthma Patient Alliance (NAPA) of the Asthma Society of Canada (ASC) today released the following position statement: "Given the potentially serious outcomes of this new policy on asthmatic and allergic travelers, we are very concerned about the recent decision made by Air Canada to allow pets in the passenger cabins of their airplanes - a policy already in place on West Jet flights. As a result of this unilateral decision by Air Canada, people with asthma and associated allergies no longer have a safe alternative for air travel.

Getting on an airplane with exposure to pet allergens is simply not an option for many travellers with allergies and asthma. Without diminishing the wishes and preferences of pet-owners, we believe that human passengers must be the priority, especially if they suffer from asthma and associated allergies. Simply stating that reasonable accommodation will be made for people with allergies and asthma at the time of flight is clearly not sufficient. Allergy and asthma sufferers must know what to expect when they are booking their flights and travelling. Additionally, airlines must understand the practical consequences of their policies and be ready to provide the required accommodations for travellers with asthma and associated allergies. They also need to know how to deal with serious health emergencies in case a traveller gets a severe asthma attack that could be life-threatening.

The NAPA Executive Committee will be submitting letters to both Air Canada and West Jet. While we would obviously prefer the airlines reconsider their policies, we understand their motivation to enhance customer service. We hope they will be willing to have an open dialogue with the NAPA Executive so that they can fully understand the impact of their decision and its consequences for travelers with asthma and associated allergies, as well as the requirements of our members. We do hope that the two national airlines will agree to meet soon to discuss this urgent concern so that we can come to an acceptable resolution for all."

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