

Another mistake

About a month ago I was too lax when eating out and it cost me, but luckily not my life. Thank goodness I carry my epinephrine! I am not sharing because I am proud of this mistake, but because maybe others can learn from it. I am a little late in posting about this as I haven been busy working on my consulting business which I hope to announce here soon!

After art class on a Wednesday, my friend and her children and my daughter and I walked to a Mexican influenced restaurant in my town ([Media, PA](#)) that I have eaten at many times, including the week before for "MOMs Night Out". We went there with the intention of getting lunch to go and eating at the playground. However, when we got there we changed our minds as we realized with three young kids and the type of food that it was easier to eat at the restaurant. It was very busy in the restaurant that day and for lunch you order at the counter and they bring the food to you where as at dinner you order at your table. The kids were needing our attention so I read the menu quickly which was on a chalk board with descriptions. I ordered a quesadilla for my daughter, guacamole and chips for the table, and a salad for me. The chalkboard said the salad had beans, corn, cheese, mixed greens, chicken and an avocado cilantro dressing. I didn't think twice about peanuts are they are not common in Mexican salads. Between ordering and watching the kids it was busy.



When the food arrived I didn't get to eat mine right away as my toddler needed help cutting her food and eating. Finally, I took a few bites of the salad. I was really hungry! Then, not sure why, but I looked in the salad and saw something suspicious – light tan, curled, and kind of hard. I pick it up wondering if it was a big piece of garlic (please be) or a PEANUT? I asked my friend what she thinks and start to feel uneasy. She thought it was a peanut and walks to ask the manager. He said that there were peanuts in the corn salsa.

At first I was not sure if I ate any peanuts as usually my reaction is quick and strong. I am pretty sure I did, but was hoping I didn't. This was the first time I had a reaction since my daughter was born and I caught myself wanting to not do what I knew I should do next as I was concerned about where she would go and I didn't want to scare her. She knows that Mommy can't have peanuts, but she's never witnessed a reaction. My car was several blocks away and my friend walked to town so I was thinking that logistics were tough. I took out one of my Epi-pens and waited for a few seconds. I knew what I needed to do, but this time being a momma I had more hesitation when I should of had less. My friend offered to walk my daughter to her house and watch her, the restaurant owner offered to drive me to the hospital I wanted to go to. In the car, I felt my throat starting to itch and my throat and chest tighten. I knew I needed to inject the Epi-Pen which I did (no it doesn't hurt). A few minutes later I was at the local Emergency Room (E.R.).

Immediately they inserted an IV and administered medications. I felt better as soon as I got to the E.R. as I knew I was in good hands having been treated there before for an anaphylactic reaction. My E.R. visit before this one was in 2009 a few weeks before I got pregnant with my daughter and was also from a salad at another restaurant. That reaction wasn't my communication error, but a breakdown in the restaurant following their allergen policy. The fourth manager covering the salad prep area in this large restaurant was

not alerted of my allergy order. A worker who did not speak English very well put a peanut sauce in my dressing as he focused only on the word peanuts in my order, instead of no peanuts. During my E.R. treatment this time my nurse said to me, "Stop eating those salads, they are trying to kill you!".

Later my husband picked up my daughter and then they came to the E.R. She was a little concerned seeing the I.V. in my arm, but I explained it all to her. Recently, I read her [The Peanut-Free Cafe](#) book which she enjoyed! After, I gave the restaurant owner some tips on disclosing high risk common allergens on the all menus, but I know I should of communicated my allergen. [Mistakes happen](#) and it is important to always have your life saving medications with food allergies!

Mom's often do not put themselves first, but I learned an important lesson. I really need to put myself first when dealing with my food allergy!

Be Well,

Lori

Please note that your MD may advise you to call 911 in the case of an anaphylactic reaction. This blog and my actions are not meant to be recommendations on how to deal with your medical condition, follow your medical providers instructions. My choice to be driven to the E.R. is because I am aware in my area that not all ambulances carry epinephrine and the hospital was close.

