

Pets on planes

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The preferences of pet owners should not replace the well-being of their fellow passengers, states an editorial in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*. Pets can be accommodated comfortably and safely in airplane cargo holds, which is where they belong. Airlines must choose to put the needs of their human passengers first, or be forced to do so.

Air travel has become increasingly difficult, with tightened security restrictions and a decreased number of services. But now Air Canada is adding to the difficulty by allowing small pets to travel airplane cabins. Flying should not include avoidable [health risks](#), especially, for passengers with allergies to pets. Many people with allergies to animals will have a reaction when they're trapped in an enclosed space, often for hours.

The Canadian Transportation Agency ruled that people allergic to nuts should be considered to have a disability under the Canada Transportation Act and must therefore be accommodated. The agency is now receiving passenger complaints about pets on airplanes and considering whether those with allergies to pets should also be considered as having a disability. Such a finding would force Canadian airlines to safeguard passengers with pet allergies.

"If the agency does not rule for the passengers, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health, which heard a briefing on this issue last fall, should take up the cause," write Dr. Matthew Stanbrook, Deputy Editor, [Canadian Medical Association Journal](#) and coauthors. "People

with allergies should be able to fly without placing their health at risk and must not be prevented from travelling for fear of being confined close to a pet."

Provided by Canadian Medical Association Journal

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