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Allergy Nonprofit Issues Parental Guidance Warning About New Peter Rabbit Film

AAFA Addresses Concerns in an Open Letter to Filmmakers to Ask for Help Fighting Food Allergy Bullying

Washington, DC (February 12, 2018) – The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) cautions parents raising children with food allergies that some scenes in the newly-released “Peter Rabbit” film may be disturbing for young viewers with food allergies. In the film, a character with a known food allergy to blackberries is attacked with them. This leads to a severe allergic reaction known as anaphylaxis and the need to use a lifesaving injection of the drug epinephrine.

“Depicting a character being attacked intentionally with his food allergen in order to trigger anaphylaxis is alarming,” says Kenneth Mendez, president and CEO of AAFA. “With six million kids living with potentially life-threatening food allergies across America, anaphylaxis is not funny.”

AAFA—and its Kids With Food Allergies (KFA) division—condemns any action of intentionally forcing someone to consume the food to which they are allergic. Although the film is fictional, this type of behavior is an example of food allergy bullying and it can be a crime. Even a small amount of exposure to a food can lead to anaphylaxis in someone allergic to that food. In some instances, anaphylaxis can be fatal.

There are 15 million Americans with food allergies. This includes one in 13 children—about two children in every classroom. There is no cure for food allergies. The very real fear and anxiety that people experience during an allergic reaction (often referred to as an impending sense of doom) is a serious matter.

In [an open letter](#) to Sony Pictures Entertainment, Sony Pictures Animation, Columbia Pictures and Animal Logic—the makers of the “Peter Rabbit” film—AAFA calls for greater awareness of food allergies and asks for help in preventing food allergy bullying. The letter states:

“We would like to work together to promote positive attitudes and safe environments for those with disabilities such as food allergies. We encourage you to examine your portrayal of food allergies in your films geared toward a young audience. We strongly urge you to refrain from the type of programming that mocks disabilities like food allergies in the future.”

Late on Sunday, Sony Pictures issued an apology about the mishandling of food allergies in their film. AAFA is in contact with Sony representatives and is hopeful for a positive outcome for our Kids With Food Allergies community.

AAFA and KFA are dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with asthma and allergic diseases through support, education, advocacy and research. The organization’s website, www.kidswithfoodallergies.org, provides educational content and resources to help those with food allergies and related conditions.

About the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

Founded in 1953 and celebrating 65 years of service, AAFA is the oldest and largest non-profit patient organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with asthma, allergies and related conditions through research, education, advocacy and support. AAFA provides practical information and community-based services through its digital communities and national network of local chapters and educational support groups. For more information, visit aafa.org.

About Kids With Food Allergies

Kids With Food Allergies (KFA) is a division of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. KFA is dedicated to keeping children safe and healthy through education and support. KFA offers the largest and most active online food allergy and anaphylaxis community for families raising children with food allergies. For more information, visit kidswithfoodallergies.org.