

NDP Response: National Food Allergy Action Plan

1. Do you agree with the following statement: Food allergy should be a public health priority in Canada?

New Democrats believe that public health initiatives are meant to keep Canadians safe. Food allergies are public health issues when Canadians may get seriously sick from their allergies because packaged food is not properly labelled.

2. As noted above, the [National Food Allergy Action Plan](#) contains a framework to guide future policy and investment decisions in support of the 2.6 million Canadians impacted by food allergy. The focus areas are prevention, management, treatment, and broad-based community and food system support. Does your party commit, in principle, to supporting this plan and its framework?

New Democrats support the principles of the National Food Allergy Action Plan. We believe that it's the federal government's responsibility to keep Canadians safe by developing education campaigns to improve awareness, developing policies to advance food safety, and expanding health services to help people who need treatment.

3. We are calling on the next federal government to commit to making a down payment on the implementation of the National Food Allergy Action Plan through a modest allocation in the 2020 Budget of \$3 million. These funds will be used to, among other supports, lead the national implementation of the Canadian Paediatric Society's guidance on early infant feeding and food allergy prevention, to help reduce the prevalence of food allergy. Our full submission to the Standing Committee on Finance is [here](#). Does your party support this budget allocation?

An NDP government would commit funding to implement the National Food Allergy Action Plan. We believe that the plan could be delivered in conjunction with our historic investment in expanding healthcare services from head to toe and our strategy to develop a national food strategy.

Our priority is ensuring that Canadians have access to safe, healthy foods.

4. There is currently just one supplier of epinephrine auto-injectors in the Canadian market, and this one supplier has had supply constraints for over 18 months, making it difficult for Canadians to fill their prescriptions for this life-saving medication. In addition, the cost of an

epinephrine auto-injector can be out-of-reach for many Canadians, particularly for those without a drug plan. What is your party's plan to improve reliable, affordable access to epinephrine auto-injectors?

The Trudeau Liberals promised that they would protect drug supply but over the past few years, Canadians have had to worry about supply shortages amidst skyrocketing drug prices.

Canadians deserve better. An NDP government have a bold vision to fix these problems by implementing universal pharmacare. We will improve access to life-saving medication, at no cost.

No one's life should be at risk because of a supply shortage.

New Democrats have a firm stance on the threat for a supply shortage of epinephrine auto-injectors. We believe that it's the federal government's responsibility to make sure that there is always enough.

An NDP government will always take a stand against drug companies that put profits over people's health. An NDP government will require drug companies that hold patents to provide enough supply or risk losing their authorization to sell in the Canadian market.

5. Effective self-management starts with proper diagnosis by an allergist, as well as receiving allergy education and support from the point of diagnosis. Unfortunately, many Canadians cannot access an allergist and the problem is particularly acute for those in rural, northern and remote communities. What is your party's plan to improve access to medically trained allergists so that no family has to go out of province for care?

Access to family doctors, nurses, specialists and allergists is a challenge across the country.

While the Scheer Conservatives and Trudeau Liberals compete to give breaks to their wealthy friends and rich corporations, New Democrats make health care our top priority.

We have a bold vision to expand healthcare services from head to toe. This is why we've made historic investments in pharmacare and dental care. This will take the pressure off provincial/territorial health budgets so we can work together to re-invest in other priority areas like closing the gap on accessing doctors.

An NDP government will work with the provinces and territories to tackle wait times and improve access to primary care across the country. We will identify coming gaps in health human resources and make a plan to recruit and retain the doctors, nurses, and other health professionals Canadians need.

- 6. *New international research is re-shaping our view on how to prevent and treat food allergy, yet food allergy has not been a traditional research priority in Canada. Developing a patient-centered research agenda, rooted in patient engagement, and defining the investment, infrastructure and process is needed to move forward. This will include areas in mental health, treatments and therapies, and other aspects focused on improving quality of life for Canadians with food allergy. What steps would your government take to strengthen research into food allergy in this country?***
- 7. *What steps would your government take to strengthen research into food allergy in this country?***

Stephen Harper and the Conservatives launched a war against science and researchers. They muzzled researchers from speaking about their work. It was dead wrong and the NDP fought against the Conservatives' censorship.

Justin Trudeau and Liberals said they would fix this but they broke yet another election promise.

To date, the Liberals have proceeded with very few of the recommendations from the report. Canadians need a federal government that will fully reverse the backward steps that the Conservatives took. Justin Trudeau and the Liberals have made no real advancements in repairing the damage over the past four years.

An NDP government will work with universities and health professionals to make sure that public research on critical health issues like food allergies continues to flourish.

- 8. *All Canadians have a right to know what is in the food they consume. Food allergen labelling regulations do not extend to non-pre-packaged foods (e.g. restaurants, bulk foods) and precautionary allergen labelling in the form of "may contain" statements is not delivering against its intended purpose to advise consumers of potential risk. What is your party's plan to improve allergen ingredient disclosure for pre- and non-pre-packaged foods so those with food allergy can make safe, informed choices?***

New Democrats believe that patient safety is the top priority. We will work with industry experts and patient advocates to review packaging to make sure that Canadians can make informed choices about the foods they purchase and consume.

9. The challenges Canadians affected by food allergy face can lead to enormous psychological, physical, and social consequences. According to a 2017-member survey almost half of respondents described their anxiety level as 8 out of 10 or higher. Food allergy is associated with symptoms of anxiety and depression, and one-in-three children with food allergy report being bullied, specifically because of their food allergy. Will your party commit to supporting a national awareness plan to better educate Canadians of the facts on food allergy and how they can support those with this medical condition, along with new funding for psycho-social interventions?

New Democrats have a vision to expand health services by providing head to toe coverage. We believe Canadians should be able to access mental health supports without having to pay for care. An NDP government will work with provinces and territories to expand access to mental health services so that people who may suffer from anxiety or depression can receive the help they need.

New Democrats also support a national awareness plan to better educate Canadians about food allergies.