



Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of America

April 6, 2021

Lorne Michaels Executive Producer
The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10112

Dear Mr. Michaels:

On behalf of Kids With Food Allergies (KFA), a division of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), and the more than 32 million Americans living with life-threatening food allergies, I am writing to share our concerns about a recent segment on “The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon.” We are disheartened that the show has once again mocked the significance of food allergies in the lives of millions of Americans.

In the segment titled “Emotional Interview” with Jimmy Fallon and Milo Ventimiglia, the pair are instructed to display the “emotion” of having your tongue swell up. Both begin to crack jokes about shellfish and EpiPens while gagging, and Milo ultimately falls out of his seat and off camera. This is not funny. Having a severe allergic reaction, or anaphylaxis, is not a joke. The very real fear that people experience during an allergic reaction is a serious matter and should never be a punchline. Anaphylaxis is a serious immune response to an allergen and can be fatal if not treated promptly.

Making light of this condition hurts adults, young adults, and children because it encourages their peers not to take the risk of allergic reactions seriously. This portrayal can also encourage bullying. Over one-third of food allergic children have reported being bullied because of their food allergies.¹ So you and your team can become more enlightened, we encourage you to visit our [No Appetite for Bullying website](#) jointly developed by a coalition of stakeholders.

Since 2016, we have repeatedly asked you and your network NBC to stop mocking food allergies. We strongly urge you to refrain from this type of programming in the future and to finally pledge to stop using food allergies as a harmful punchline. We would once again welcome the opportunity to educate your network and the cast about the realities of food allergies so that they and your viewing audience can better understand and recognize the gravity of the disease.

We are available to discuss further. Please feel free to contact me – my information is enclosed.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Mendez
President and CEO
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

¹ Sicherer, Scott et al. “[Bullying among pediatric patients with food allergy.](#)” Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, Vol 105, Issue 4 (October 2010).