

'How ECCFD First Responders Saved Our Son's Life'



My wife and I had no idea our oldest son Carsen was allergic to tree nuts.

One day when he was just 3 years old, my wife was baking in the kitchen with his help. He decided to do what most kids would enjoy doing, he licked the inside of a bag that previously had sugar, cinnamon, and walnuts.

Almost immediately Carsen began to complain of an "itchy throat", then he had hives around his mouth. His eyes began to swell shut. He started to have trouble breathing. My wife immediately called 911. In LESS THAN 5 MINUTES my son went from sitting on my wife's lap in deep distress, to being rolled into an ambulance and on his way to the hospital.

For anyone who hasn't needed help, let me explain how our panic situation was handled by the first responders. East Contra Costa County Fire Department was on scene in 2 minutes followed immediately by paramedics.

The fire fighters very professionally and quickly wasted no time taking action while also communicating with my son in a way that he still remembers and speaks of to this day when trying to get more chocolate from mom and dad. He always says, "The fireman said it was ok for me to have chocolate, just not nuts."

The day after the incident I received a message from Battalion Chief Brian Helmick following up on our son. He wanted to make sure our experience with the fire department was good. He also offered additional help if it was still needed.

I can tell you as a father being an hour away from home and receiving a call from your wife about having called 911 for what means most to you in life, you feel helpless. Knowing that these heroes are minutes away and are dedicated to saving lives is truly amazing. You cannot put a price on human life and these heroes deserve all the tools/equipment needed to grow stronger as the community grows.

The comfort I have knowing that there is a team of first responders committed to my family as well as the entire community's safety cannot be explained by words.

Thank God for First Responders!

Ryan Loewen