



**UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL JUNE 2**

**Canadian Olympic Freestyle Skier Defies Gravity and a Life-threatening Allergy**  
*Steve Omischl doesn't let his serious peanut allergy ground him*

**TORONTO, Ontario - June 2, 2009-** Canadian Olympian Steve Omischl is a high-flying freestyle skier with soaring ambitions for 2010. The North Bay, Ontario native and B.C.-resident recently clinched his fourth World Cup title; however, one of his biggest challenges off the slopes has been his life-threatening allergy to peanuts. To raise awareness about severe allergies, Omischl is teaming with King Pharmaceuticals Canada - the distributors of EpiPen® - to let Canadians know that allergies should be taken seriously, but not to let them stop you from achieving your dreams. He's also encouraging people at risk for anaphylaxis to always carry an epinephrine auto-injector – the recommended first line of treatment for someone experiencing a severe reaction, which can be fatal in minutes if left untreated.

Canadians can find out if they are at risk for anaphylaxis by taking EpiPen's Severe Allergy Risk Test available at [www.EpiPen.ca](http://www.EpiPen.ca).

Omischl was diagnosed as a child after he reacted to a peanut butter sandwich his mom gave him. Despite his best efforts to avoid peanuts, he's had a few serious encounters since then, most notably the day before the final World Cup Freestyle skiing event of the 2007/2008 season in Davos, Switzerland. A bite of a cheese sandwich that had a trace of peanuts caused a serious reaction and fortunately, a medical professional was able to provide assistance. Undeterred, the next day Steve flew twelve metres in the air and executed three perfect back-flips with four twists, winning the event and the distinguished title of World Cup Champion.

"I don't want a peanut allergy to sideline me," said Steve. "I need to be very careful not to eat anything without reading the label first. When you're hungry, you usually eat anything, and fast. I can't do that."

Food is the most common cause of severe allergic reactions. Other common triggers are insect stings, medicines, and latex.

"Aside from the event in Switzerland, I have had a few close calls at dinner parties. It can be tricky when people use different sauces and oils, which may contain peanuts," explained Omischl. "I have learned the importance of having my EpiPen with me at all times. Obviously, it could save my life."

Because Steve is often travelling to far-away places for competitions, he makes a point of showing new people he is travelling with how to use an EpiPen, "I also reassure them that's it's not a big deal to use it, it's very simple - just remove the cap and inject into the mid-outer thigh."

(more)

“Steve’s story underscores the importance of how vital it is for people with severe allergies to carry an epinephrine auto-injector with them wherever they go,” said Mary Allen, Chief Executive Officer of the Allergy/Asthma Information Association ([www.aaia.ca](http://www.aaia.ca)). “Steve is truly an inspiration to others, proving that people who have severe allergies can realize their dreams and live active lives,” concluded Allen.

A 2007 national study revealed that only one in five Canadians at risk for an anaphylactic attack remember to carry an epinephrine auto-injector with them at all times.<sup>i</sup>

### **About Steve Omischl**

Armed with a strong work ethic that was instilled at a young age, Steve supported himself while working his way to the top and onto the Canadian Freestyle Ski team, followed by the Salt Lake City and the Turin Olympic teams.

Steve has an impressive list of World Cup championship medals, including 10 gold, nine silver, and seven bronze. He is a three-time Canadian Champion with a steely ambition to represent his home country at the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games and capture that within-reach Olympic gold medal. Steve also finds time to inspire audiences by sharing stories of his hard work and determination with students and corporate audiences. For more information about Steve, visit [www.toyourfeet.ca](http://www.toyourfeet.ca).

### **About EpiPen**

Further information can be found at [www.EpiPen.ca](http://www.EpiPen.ca) along with a Severe Allergy Risk Test to determine your risk of anaphylaxis.

### **About King Pharmaceuticals**

King, with offices in Mississauga, Ontario and headquartered in Bristol, Tennessee, is a vertically integrated branded pharmaceutical company.

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For more information or to book an interview with Steve Omischl, please contact:

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<sup>i</sup> Data collection for this study was conducted via Leger Marketing OmniCan and commissioned by King Pharmaceuticals Canada in collaboration with Anaphylaxis Canada. Data was collected between May 29 and June 3, 2007. A random household selection was achieved by inviting residents across Canada over 18 years of age to complete the survey. A total of 1,502 interviews were completed. The margin of error for a sample of this size is +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20.