



## Policy on Prescribing Diazepam & Other Sedatives for Fear of Flying

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#### B. Document Details

<b>Classification:</b>	Prescribing policies
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<b>Organisation:</b>	THE MANOR SURGERY
<b>CQC Framework Reference:</b>	S8
<b>Current Version Number:</b>	1.0
<b>Current Document Approved By:</b>	Dr Christopher Evans-Hall
<b>Date Approved:</b>	15.07.2025

#### C. Document Revision and Approval History

Version	Date	Version Created By:	Version Approved By:	Comments
1.0	July 2025	Dr Christopher Evans-Hall	Dr Christopher Evans-Hall	Review July 2027

## Practice Policy

This practice does not prescribe Diazepam or other sedative medications (including but not limited to benzodiazepines, z-drugs, or similar sedatives) for the purpose of alleviating fear of flying. This decision is based on clear clinical guidance and patient safety concerns.

## Rationale

### 1. Clinical Contraindication

- According to the British National Formulary (BNF), the use of benzodiazepines (including Diazepam) for the treatment of phobic states, including fear of flying, is contraindicated. They are ineffective as a long-term solution for phobias and do not address the underlying issue.

### 2. Risk of Paradoxical Effects

- Diazepam and similar drugs can cause paradoxical reactions, including increased agitation, aggression, and disinhibition. These reactions can pose a serious risk in the confined environment of an aircraft, endangering both the individual and other passengers.

### 3. Safety Risks in an Emergency

- Sedatives can cause over-sedation, impairing awareness, coordination, and reaction times. In the event of an in-flight emergency, the patient may be unable to respond appropriately, placing themselves and others at greater risk.

### 4. Increased Risk of Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)

- Sedatives can lead to prolonged immobility, increasing the risk of venous thromboembolism (VTE) during flights, especially long-haul travel.

### 5. Legal and Regulatory Issues

- Certain countries strictly control the importation of sedatives and other controlled drugs. Passengers may face legal issues at international borders, including arrest or confiscation of medication.

### 6. Lack of Medical Supervision

- In-flight, there is no medical supervision. Any adverse effects from sedatives (e.g., excessive sedation, respiratory depression, confusion, or falls) cannot be appropriately managed in the aircraft setting.

### 7. Best Practice Alternatives

- Evidence-based alternatives such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or specific fear of flying courses (often run by airlines) have been shown to be more effective, safer, and provide lasting benefit without the risks associated with sedatives.

## Conclusion

For the above reasons, our practice does not prescribe Diazepam or other sedatives for fear of flying. We advise patients seeking help for this issue to access non-drug interventions and appropriate psychological therapies.

This policy is in line with NHS guidance, BNF recommendations, and good clinical practice to ensure patient safety and appropriate use of healthcare resources