

Sedative Prescribing for Fear of Flying

Patients come to us, asking us to prescribe medications such as Diazepam for fear of flying. There are a number of reasons why prescribing such medications are not recommended.

Please note we do **NOT** prescribe sedatives for fear of flying. This decision has been made by the GP Partners and is adhered to by all prescribers working in the practice. The reasons for this are listed below:

- 1) Diazepam is a sedative, which means it makes you sleepy and more relaxed. If there is an emergency during the flight it may impair your ability to concentrate, follow instructions and react to the situation. This could have serious safety consequences for you and those around you.
- 2) Sedative drugs can make you fall asleep, however when you do sleep it is an unnatural non-REM sleep. This means you won't move around as much as during natural sleep. This can cause you to be at increased risk of developing a blood clot (DVT) in the leg or even the lung. Blood clots are very dangerous and can even prove fatal. This risk is even greater if your flight is greater than four hours.
- 3) Whilst most people find benzodiazepines like diazepam sedating, a small number have paradoxical agitation and aggression. They can also cause disinhibition and lead you to behave in a way that you would not normally. This could impact on your safety as well as that of other passengers and could also get you into trouble with the law.

4) According to the prescribing guidelines doctors follow (BNF) Benzodiazepines are contraindicated (not allowed) in phobia. Your doctor is taking a significant legal risk by prescribing against these guidelines. They are only licensed short term for a crisis in generalised anxiety.

5) Diazepam and similar drugs are illegal in several countries. They may be confiscated, or you may find yourself in trouble with the police.

6) Diazepam stays in your system for quite a while. If your job requires you to submit to random drug testing, you may fail this having taken diazepam.

We appreciate that fear of flying is very real and very frightening. A much better approach is to tackle this properly with a Fear of Flying course run by the airlines and we have listed a number of these below.

[Fear of Flying School podcast - Health Podcast | Podchaser](#)

[Our courses | Flying With Confidence](#)

[Fear of flying course | Fearless Flyer \(easyjet.com\)](#)

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/phobias/symptoms/>