

Sedative Prescribing for Fear of Flying Policy.

At Belvidere Medical Practice, we will not prescribe Diazepam or other such sedatives for patients who wish to use this for a fear of flying. We have several reasons why we have taken this decision:

- 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 increased 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 Police.
- 4) According to the prescribing guidelines doctors follow (BNF) Benzodiazepines are contraindicated in phobias. Your doctor would be taking a significant legal risk by prescribing against these guidelines. They are only licensed short term for a crisis in generalised anxiety. If this is the case, you should be getting proper care and support for your mental health and not going on a flight.
- 5) Diazepam and other such sedatives 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 occupation 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.

Easy

Jet www.fearlessflyer.easyjet.com

British

Airways www.flyingwithconfidence.com

Virgin www.flyingwithoutfear.co.uk