**Quarryfoot practice guidance: diazepam for fear of flying**

August 2024

As a practice, we have taken the decision to no longer prescribe benzodiazepines (eg Diazepam) to patients requesting them for fear of flying. There are many reasons for this, summarised below:

* Diazepam is a sedative and can impair your ability to concentrate. It may make you sleepy on a flight which increases your risk of injury especially in emergency situations. This is dangerous to you and also to your fellow passengers. It can also reduce your ability to react to save your life if you have to escape quickly.
* Some people who take diazepam can have mood changes that make you behave in ways you usually wouldn’t, including becoming agitated or violent. This again could affect everyone’s safety on board and also get you in trouble with the law.
* These drugs make you sleep in an unnaturally deep sleep. This means you won’t move around as much as normal which puts you at higher risk of blood clots (Deep Vein Thromboses or DVTs) in the legs or lungs. These can be a risk to your life.
* Taking drugs for anxiety stops your normal adjustment response that would gradually lessen anxiety overtime.
* Our prescribing guidelines state that prescribing this medication for short term mild anxiety is not appropriate and it is in fact contraindicated in phobic disorders. It should only be used for “a crisis in generalised anxiety” – if you are in a crisis such as this, then you are unlikely to be fit to fly. Fear of flying itself is not a generalised anxiety disorder.
* The sedating effects of diazepam can cause respiratory depression, where people don’t breathe as regularly or deeply as normal. This reduces your blood oxygen levels. Flying at altitude further decreases your blood oxygen levels, so the two together can cause significant risk to you.
* In some countries it is illegal to import these drugs eg in the Middle East, so passengers will have to use a different strategy for their homeward bound journey or subsequent legs of their journey.

**Fear of flying courses:**

We appreciate that fear of flying is very real and frightening to experience. We recommend choosing a Fear of Flying Course to help overcome your anxiety and feel more confident to get on flights without medication.

Easy Jet [www.fearlessflyer.easyjet.com](http://www.fearlessflyer.easyjet.com)

British Airways [www.flyingwithconfidence.com/courses](http://www.flyingwithconfidence.com/courses)

[www.flyingwithoutfear.com](http://www.flyingwithoutfear.com)