

PRESCRIBING DIAZEPAM AND FEAR OF FLYING POLICY

Kinson Road Medical Centre does not issue sedatives such as diazepam for fear of flying.

This policy decision has been made by the GPs at the surgery and is adhered to by all prescribers working in the practice.

We appreciate that fear of flying is very real and very frightening. One way to tackle this is to attend a Fear of Flying course run by the airlines, and we have listed a number of these below:

- EasyJet – 02038131644
- British Airways – 01252793250
- Virgin Airways – 01423714900

Alternatively, if you still feel you wish to have this medication prescribed then you would need to see a doctor with Aviation training. These are usually private.

Why Diazepam is not recommended:

1. Diazepam is a sedative, which means it makes you sleepy, more relaxed and can significantly delay your reaction times. 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 sedative medications like diazepam have a relaxing effect, a small number of people can feel more agitated or even aggressive after taking it. Diazepam 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. Benzodiazepines are not licensed for use in phobias. They are potentially very addictive, and dependence can form quickly.
5. Diazepam and similar drugs are illegal in several countries. They may be confiscated, or you may find yourself in trouble with the police if you are carrying any on arrival.

Please also note that following the same advice above we are not encouraging the use of diazepam for dental appointments, hospital scans or other procedures.