

Sedative Prescribing: Fear of Flying

Ravenswood Medical Practice does **not** prescribe sedatives for fear of flying; the reasons for this can be found below:

1. Sedating medications (such as diazepam) make 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 these medications to be 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 and similar medications are contraindicated (not recommended) in the treatment of phobia. A Doctor would be taking a significant risk by prescribing against these guidelines.
5. Diazepam and similar drugs are illegal in many 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.

Ravenswood Medical Practice appreciates that a fear of flying is very real and very frightening, several airlines and travel insurance firms provide support for the management of this problem.

The following links are not endorsed by Ravenswood Medical Practice but might be useful for further information:

- www.thefearofflying.com/programs/fly-and-be-calm
- www.fearlessflyer.easyjet.com
- www.britishairways.com/en-gb/information/travel-assistance/flying-with-confidence
- www.flyingwithoutfear.com

