



**LAWSON ROAD
SURGERY**

THE HEALTH CENTRE

LAWSON ROAD

NORWICH

NR3 4LE

01603 427096

NWICB.LAWSONROADADMIN@NHS.NET

PRACTICE POLICY - DIAZEPAM FEAR OF FLYING

We do not recommend prescribing sedatives, such as the benzodiazepine Diazepam, where there is a fear of flying. There are a number of reasons for this that are set out below:

- Diazepam is a sedative, which means it makes most people 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 the you and those around you.
- 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 (VTE) in the leg or lungs. VTE's are very dangerous and can even prove fatal. This risk is even greater if your flight is longer than 4 hours.
- Whilst most people find benzodiazepines like diazepam sedating, a small number of people experience the opposite effect and may become aggressive. Benzodiazepines 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. This is particularly likely if diazepam is combined with alcohol.
- According to the national prescribing guidelines that doctors follow benzodiazepines are not allowed or licensed to be prescribed in cases of phobia. Thus, your doctor would be taking a significant legal risk by prescribing diazepam for fear of flying as it is going against these guidelines.
- Diazepam and similar drugs are illegal in a number of countries. They may be confiscated, or you may find yourself in trouble with the police.
- 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.
- Diazepam affects your central nervous system which in turn can result in breathing difficulties.

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

Easy Jet <https://www.fearlessflyer.easyjet.com/>

British Airways <https://flyingwithconfidence.com/>

Virgin <https://flyingwithoutfear.com>

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Dr M Hunt, Dr A Shiner, Dr H Harper, Dr H Fox
James Hipperson MPharm