



PRESCRIBED MEDICATION FOR FEAR OF FLYING – KIVETON PARK MEDICAL PRACTICE

Due to a medical safety alert update and on reviewing the clinical guidelines for the prescribing of sedative medications, we at Kiveton Medical Practice will no longer prescribe sedating drugs called benzodiazepines (diazepam/lorazepam/temazepam/midazolam) for the use of treating fear of flying.

We have taken the decision to put our patients' safety first and to follow this safety guidance and will no longer provide prescriptions for benzodiazepines for the following reasons:

- 1) The use of benzodiazepines cause longer reaction times & slowed thinking, which during a flight will put the passenger at significant risk of not being able to act in a manner which could save their life in the event of a safety critical scenario
- 2) The use of benzodiazepines has the potential to increase the risk of DVT (deep vein thrombosis)
- 3) The sedating effects can reduce respiratory function which has the potential to be life threatening – even more so if there is a combination with alcohol.
- 4) There is the possibility of increased aggression may be reported by patients taking benzodiazepines and therefore has potential to put other occupants of the aircraft at risk
- 5) Benzodiazepines are not recommended for those people with phobic states.
- 6) For some countries it is illegal to import these drugs and so the passenger will need to use a different strategy for the homeward bound journey and /or any subsequent legs of the journey

We recommend patients who have fear of flying to research going on fear of flying courses. These are run by several major airlines and sometimes by local airports, below are a few examples:

British Airways

<https://www.britishairways.com/en-gb/information/travel-assistance/flying-with-confidence>

Easy Jet

<http://www.easyjet.com/en/help/extra-services/fear-of-flying>

Virgin Airways

<https://www.flyingwithoutfear.co.uk/>

Flight anxiety does not come under the remit of General Medical Services as defined in the GP contract and so we are not obliged to prescribe for this.

Patients who still wish to take benzodiazepines for flight anxiety are advised to consult with a private GP or travel clinic.

<https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice/general-travel-health-advice/air-travel#FearofFlying>