**Medications for fear of flying: Neetside Surgery**

30th April 2024

Following a review of the prescribing policies by doctors at the Practice, the decision has been made to limit the prescribing of sedatives (such as diazepam and temazepam) for ‘fear of flying.’

We provide the following information which gives the background and strong reasons to implement this decision. We hope that you will understand our stance on this. Many other GP practices have similar policies across the UK. We also provide the following advice to patients with worries about flying.

The reasons behind this decision:

* Emergencies are rare whilst flying, but taking sedatives like diazepam reduces reaction in the event of an emergency.
* These medicines cause deep sleep and not moving around increases the risk of getting a blood clot in the leg (deep vein thrombosis – DVT) or lungs (pulmonary embolus). Especially if your flight is longer than 4 hours.
* Occasionally diazepam and similar drugs can cause agitation/aggression.
* There is evidence that the use of these drugs stops the normal adjustment response that would gradually lessen anxiety over time and may increase anxiety in the long term, especially if used repeatedly, in general, as well as for this purpose.
* Sedative use added to alcohol consumption increases effects.
* Diazepam and similar controlled drugs are illegal (even if prescribed) in many countries and may cause trouble with the police if found at Customs.
* Diazepam stays in your system for some time. If your job or sport needs you to have random drug testing, you may fail this having taken diazepam.

**Resources from the aviation industry:**

easyJet – <https://www.fearlessflyer.easyjet.com/>

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

Virgin Atlantic – <https://flywith.virginatlantic.com/gb/en/wellbeing-and-health/flying-without-fear.html>

**Further points for consideration**

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

It is important to tell your travel insurer about your medical conditions and the medications you take. If you do not, there is a risk of your insurer not paying if you try to make a claim.

More information on how to manage a fear of flying and flying anxiety can be found [here](https://patient.info/news-and-features/how-to-manage-flight-anxiety).