

## Fear of Flying

Fear of flying is a phobia which can cause a great deal of distress. The best approach at tackling this longterm is with a fear of flying course run by many of the airlines. There are also audio downloads available. This is what the doctors at Norton Brook medical Centre would recommend. Please visit this website for more information:

<https://www.gatwickairport.com/booktrip/Travel-advice/fear-of-flying/>

Very occasionally a sedative medication (ie diazepam) is prescribed, however there are many reasons why this may not be the best option for you and it is important that you are aware of the possible risks:

1. There is evidence to show that the use of diazepam stops the normal adjustment response that would gradually lessen anxiety over time. It may therefore perpetuate and increase anxiety in the longterm, especially if used repeatedly.
2. Diazepam is a sedative, which means it makes 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.
3. 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 4 hours.
4. Whilst most people find diazepam sedating, a small number have paradoxical agitation and aggression. It 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.
5. 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.
6. You should not drive after taking diazepam.
7. You should not drink alcohol with diazepam.