

**Ash Trees Policy re: Sedative Prescribing for Fear of Flying**

Ash Trees Surgery do NOT prescribe sedatives/benzodiazepines (eg diazepam) for fear of flying. This policy decision has been made by the GP partners and is adhered to by all prescribers in the practice. The reasons for this can be found below:

1. Diazepam being a sedative will make you sleepier and more relaxed. This can impair your ability to concentrate, follow instructions and react to situations in the event of an emergency on the aircraft. This could have serious safety consequences for you and other passengers.
2. Sedative drugs make you fall asleep, but it is an unnatural non-REM sleep. This makes you more immobile in your sleep and therefore increases the risk of developing a blood clot (DVT) in your legs or even your lungs. Blood clots are very dangerous and can prove fatal. The risk of developing a blood clot increases further with a flight time of over 4 hours.
3. A small number of patients will have paradoxical aggression and agitation when taking benzodiazepines. They can also cause disinhibition. Both could impact on your safety and that of other passengers; this could also lead to trouble with the law.
4. According to prescribing guidance followed by GPs (BNF – British National Formulary) benzodiazepines are contraindicated (not allowed) to be used in phobia management. There is a significant legal risk for GPs to prescribe against these guidelines. They are approved for use for short term use for a crisis in generalised anxiety. If this is the case, then it is more appropriate for you to get proper care and support for your mental health rather than taking a flight.
5. Diazepam and other similar drugs are illegal in several countries. These could be confiscated or get in trouble with the police.
6. Diazepam remains in your system for some time – if you are employed in a job requiring random drug testing then this could cause a failed test.
7. It is a requirement to tell insurers about medical conditions and medication being taken. If not disclosed, then there is a risk an insurer could not pay in the event of a claim.

We appreciate that fear of flying is very real and very frightening. We would recommend a better approach being to tackle this fear properly with a Fear of Flying course that are run by several airlines, some of which are listed below:

**Easy Jet** [www.fearlessflyer.easyjet.com](http://www.fearlessflyer.easyjet.com) 0203 813 1644

**British Airways** [www.flyingwithconfidence.com](http://www.flyingwithconfidence.com) 01252 793250

**Virgin** [www.flyingwithoutfear.co.uk](http://www.flyingwithoutfear.co.uk) 01423 714900