Diazepam Prescribing for Medical Procedures

After very careful consideration Farnham Park Health Group has reviewed our benzodiazepine prescribing and established our new policy not to prescribe benzodiazepines or sedatives (such as diazepam) to patients for medical procedures.

Medical Procedures

The Practice has made the decision not to prescribe Diazepam, or any sedation, for MRI scans or any other medical procedures, including dental procedures.

Some people find scans daunting and, in the past, you may have received a prescription from your GP for a sedative such as Diazepam to help with claustrophobia or anxiety during such procedures. Such prescribing is no longer considered safe.

This will no longer be possible for the reasons detailed below.

For most cases we, as your GP Practice, do not request MRI scans. These are almost always requested by hospital clinicians. If you feel too anxious to undergo an MRI scan, please speak to the requesting team to discuss your options as this is not the responsibility of the Practice.

There are several reasons why we do not prescribe these medicines for procedures:

- GPs are not trained to provide the correct level of sedation for a procedure / scan. Providing too little sedation will not help you, providing too much sedation can make you too sleepy, which could lead to the procedure being cancelled. Too much sedation can dangerously affect your breathing. After taking a sedative for a procedure or scan, you will need to be closely monitored to keep you safe.
- Although Diazepam makes most people who take it sleepy, in some rare situations it can have an opposite effect and make people aggressive or agitated.
- Scans and hospital procedures are often delayed, therefore the team performing the procedure or scan should provide the sedation, to ensure you become sleepy and relaxed at the right time.

The Royal College of Radiologists have strict guidance on the safe sedation of patients during investigations such as CT and MRI scans. It would be unsafe for us to prescribe a sedative that we are unable to monitor. If you were to become unwell during a scan after taking a sedative that the Radiology team did not know about, this could be very dangerous.

Again, if you have concerns about anxiety of claustrophobia with regards to a scan, please contact the Department who requested the scan or the Radiology department, as they are responsible for providing this if they feel it is clinically necessary. It is not the responsibility of the GP Practice, and we will not prescribe for these reasons.

Finally, for procedures such as cataract operations or dental procedures it is the responsibility of the Surgeon or Dentist to prescribe any sedation, if they feel you require it. Requests to the Practice for such reasons will always be declined.