

# Ask Us: Overseas Travel

By Alex Coombs & Jane Portnoy

Dear Ask Us,

*I am planning my first overseas trip now that the borders are open.*

*I have been saving hard, and want to see the world. Do you have any hints or tips, particularly given that I have a severe bleeding disorder? I'm also concerned about travelling with COVID out and about!*

From "Unwordly Traveller"

Hey Unwordly Traveller,

*We guess that the COVID enforced lockdowns and restrictions we've all endured over the last few years have given you time to save and ponder the travel adventure that awaits. You can make your trip very special, and we don't want any unexpected glitches to spoil the whole thing.*

*Of course, sometimes the unexpected happens, so making sure that you are prepared helps...*

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is strongly advised for those with bleeding disorders, severe and otherwise. If you need treatment, care or hospitalization overseas, this can be expensive - especially in countries that don't

have a Reciprocal Health Agreement with Australia.

*Does your bank or credit card company offer you discounted travel insurance?*



There is a comprehensive resource published by the government on the Smartraveller website:

<https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/CHOICE-travel-insurance-guide-COVID-19#:~:text=Several%20travel%20insurers%20now%20offer,to%20medical%20and%20repatriation%20costs.>



HFA has also recently put together advice for travellers:

<https://www.haemophilia.org.au/publications/national-haemophilia/2022/no-217-march-2022/travelling-during-covid-19>



## MOBILE DATA

Make sure that you have checked out data packs for your smart device, and worked out what one suits you. You can often use local WiFi, but sometimes you also need maps, translation apps and currency converters in addition to access to your phone calls. You will also need access to MyABDR if you are recording your treatment.

Global roaming can be very expensive, so it is best to know what the charges are before you go. Often you can get a local plan/SIM card or pay for a travel pack from your Australian provider.

# HAEMOPHILIA TREATMENT & OTHER HEALTH CONDITIONS

Make sure you speak with your Haemophilia Treatment Centre (HTC) medical staff about your trip as early as possible, as they may have local knowledge on some of the countries you plan to travel through. Please request a medication and treatment travel letter with as much

notice time as possible, and discuss what else you might need to take with you (e.g. a cooler bag/small esky for your treatment). Your HTC medical staff will advise if you need to make a clinic appointment, especially if it's been awhile since the team have seen you.

Also research the details of the nearest local HTC in countries of intended travel. You can also contact your own HTC for advice if something happens while you are away. But be mindful of the time differences between Australia and other countries!



**Research what vaccinations you may need. This can be particularly important when travelling to some areas in Asia.**

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/travel-and-holidays>



**Research the local rules in your destination countries on mask wearing & Covid vaccination cover?**

<https://www.haemophilia.org.au/publications/national-haemophilia/2022/no-217-march-2022/travelling-during-covid-19>

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## LANGUAGE

Can you speak the local language? A translation app on your smart device, or a list of local phrases can be really helpful. What is the local word for hospital? Ambulance? Police? Can you seek out local medical care if you or a travel buddy needs it?

Having a few phrases in the local language can also be a way of making local contacts and to see things beyond the usual tourist magnets.



## PLAN FOR COVID & BLEEDS

*Are you travelling with a buddy?*

*What would you do if one of you got COVID or needed to isolate?*

*Does your buddy know about your bleeding disorder?*

*Do you have a plan for if you get an injury?*

## PACKING LIST & TIPS:

- ◆ your ABDR & Medicare card with you
- ◆ treatment if you need it
- ◆ a Medication & Treatment Travel letter from your HTC
- ◆ passport, Covid vaccination evidence on your smart device & printed smart device chargers & converter plugs for the local power outlets
- ◆ spare padlocks & keys for your bags & copies of the keys to the bag padlocks you use
- ◆ as inconvenient as it may be, carry your backpack in front of you
- ◆ use a money pouch or “bumbag” keep your valuables out of sight under your clothing

Don't forget to enjoy yourself, relax, take in the sights, sounds, foods & culture!

# ALEX & JANE'S TOP TRAVEL TIPS



## Share Your Plans

Share your travel plans with your family, make sure someone has a copy of ALL your documents, including passport, vaccinations, and your itinerary. Upload a backup to the cloud or equivalent.



**CLOUD  
STORAGE  
TIPS**



## Pack Light

Pack lightly, as a heavy suitcase is more challenging and can be expensive if you go shopping for the local trinkets.. Fridge magnets or snow globes can be so appealing! Or that bargain “antique” Buddha head from Bali, authentic sports T from your overseas soccer club, or must-have travel coffee mug.



**BANNED  
GOODS**



## Know the Border Rules

Not everything you buy overseas can be brought in Australia due to the strict quarantine rules that protect Australia from overseas pests and microbes. Wood items, especially from some parts of Asia, may contain pests hidden under the paint etc.

You should declare any items you purchased overseas. You will be given a Declaration form on your return flight into Australia to complete. Be honest and up-front at all time - fines can be expensive and Australian Border Force sniffer dogs will welcome you home at the airport. They are not just there to be cute! They also sniff out illicit substance.



**CAN YOU  
BRING IT?**

## CURRENCY

See your local bank or existing credit card company for advice. You can use your own existing debit and credit cards overseas but beware of these being lost, stolen, fraudulently used and/or copied in local ATMs. There are also fees for currency conversion.

You can buy travel cards and load them with a certain amount of spending money to limit potential losses whilst you take in the sights. Pick pocket thieves abound in some countries overseas - they can be so fast that you don't notice! Here are some suggestion to look into:

- ◆ [thecurrencyshop.com.au/travel-cards](http://thecurrencyshop.com.au/travel-cards)
- ◆ [travelex.com.au/travel-money-card](http://travelex.com.au/travel-money-card)
- ◆ [commbank.com.au/travel/travel-money-card.html](http://commbank.com.au/travel/travel-money-card.html)

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