

# FACTORED IN

## FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

### Jack's latest travel adventures



Hi, my name's Jack. I am 23 years old and I have severe haemophilia A

HFA interviewed Jack about his recent trip to the USA and Canada and what was different for him. In the past Jack has also travelled to southeast Asia and Europe – see his story here: <https://tinyurl.com/NH223-Jacks-story>

#### Where did you go on this trip?

On my most recent trip, I went over to North America and to Canada. So, places like Vancouver, Whistler, Banff, Calgary, which was awesome, very cold. And then we went down to America, to Las Vegas, Arizona and San Francisco.



In the Rockies it got down to -40 degrees.



## Jack's story

### What were the highlights for you?

The highlight of my trip was probably in British Columbia in Canada. We spent a lot of time snowboarding in the Rockies. It got down to -40 degrees at one point, which was an interesting experience. But I spent lots of days on the slopes and saw some cool wildlife and had some awesome snow.

I loved the Grand Canyon in America. It was much bigger than I expected. We went to the Western Ridge and I did a skywalk. You walk out and it has a glass bottom - and I really hate heights so that wasn't my favourite thing. But I walked around a bunch of different spots along the edge and looked out.

And Las Vegas? Oh, you know what they say - what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas! But I saw Fisher at Caesars Palace, who is a big Australian DJ. That was pretty cool.

I also got to go to the Sphere, which was unreal. Obviously, it's a massive sphere - fully immersive 360 degrees, screens that go all the way around you and when you sit in it, it feels like you're flying. They have videos and robots in there as well. I think it holds 40,000 people. It's crazy. They have a screen on the outside, so as you walk through Vegas, there's a smiley face looking down at you, or basketballs, all different sorts of things.

### How did you manage your haemophilia? What was different this time?

My treatment schedule with my subcutaneous product is once every fortnight. On this trip I had 3 treatments in 5 weeks - a massive change compared to when I went to Asia on factor treatment. I was doing factor treatment 5 times a week at that stage, so it was more like 30 treatments.

This time round, the biggest challenge for me was doing a lot more high-risk activities. We did about 7 or 8 days of snowboarding.

So, it was important to have a good treatment plan to manage the high risk of bleeding, and make sure I had a factor product with me to treat any bleed in case I got injured, not just my regular subcutaneous non-factor product. And it did happen - my ankle blew up on the second last day of snowboarding.



This was a different trip for me with the snowboarding.

### What did you need to plan for?

A lot of the work behind travel in this trip hadn't changed in terms of planning and insurance and carrying enough treatment.

I started conversations with my Treatment Centre about my travel plans about 4 months before I went so we had time to sort the documents and get them printed out and on my phone.

We also discussed treatment, mainly that I had enough factor and I knew where hospitals or help was on my travels if I needed it. I did use all of my additional factor VIII (8) whilst I was over there, which hasn't happened to me on a trip before, just from being really banged up with lots of bruising.

I made sure I had an Esky and cooler bag to keep my treatment cold whilst traveling and had the right documents with me, all in my carry-on.

### Did you have any treatment adventures?

America was the first country that has actually pulled me up at customs. That's never happened to me before, so it was a bit freaky.

They stopped me and I was pulled aside with the Border Patrol officers. They ripped apart my bag, going through everything - they're like, why do you have needles and all this sort of stuff in your bag? They took my treatment out of the boxes and swabbed down all my stuff and tested it to make sure it wasn't some illicit drug.

I had my treatment letters and they just looked at them. Then I pretty much got waved through, once they checked it was all good. But it definitely highlighted the importance of having letters!

### Who did you tell about your haemophilia while you were travelling and why?

I travelled with the same mate who went to Southeast Asia with me, so he was already across my treatment and haemophilia in general, which was really handy.

But it was certainly a different experience for him, because last time, I wasn't on my non-factor product, whereas now I am. He was amazed by how much less treatment I had to bring this time, compared to when we went to Asia.

And I think having other people aware that you're travelling or of your condition when you're travelling is massively important, especially in countries that don't have the same sort of healthcare system. America is very different to Australia. Having people who know your condition and can talk to doctors is super important, especially if something bad was to happen, to make sure that they can get what's needed across in those situations.



I travelled with my mate, so he was already across my haemophilia



Another thing is staying super vigilant when you are drinking or partying.

## What travel tips do you have for other young people with haemophilia?

One tip is being aware of the risks you're taking and staying within your limits. Don't push yourself when you're a long way from home.

This was a different trip for me with the snowboarding. But when I was sore, I would not go out and looked after myself. I was with some friends who are much more experienced than me and don't have this sort of injury risk. They would be doing big jumps but I would just do stuff that I'm comfortable with.

Drinking overseas is part of growing up. But another thing is staying super vigilant when you are drinking or partying because it's at times when you're not as rational about what's going on that you can get hurt if you're not careful.

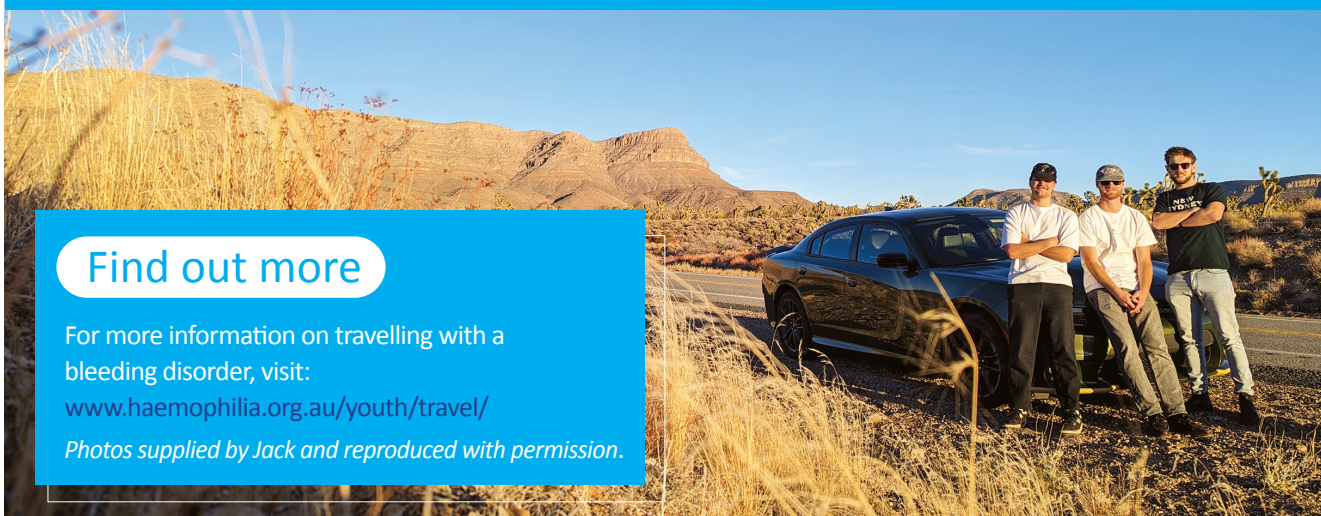
As far as general travel tips for young people with haemophilia - the number one thing is make sure you plan – a plan for your treatment, a plan of where you'd go if you were injured, your insurance.

As long as you've got everything ticked off before you go, you can travel just like any normal person.

## Jack's top travel tips

- Plan ahead!
- Organise a treatment plan and treatment, documents for customs or healthcare
- Know where the local HTC's and hospitals are
- Have travel insurance
- Make sure someone you are travelling with knows about your bleeding disorder and what to do in emergencies
- Know the risks you are taking and your limits
- Take extra care of yourself when you are drinking or partying.

Make sure you plan – and you can travel just like any normal person.



## Find out more

For more information on travelling with a bleeding disorder, visit:

[www.haemophilia.org.au/youth/travel/](http://www.haemophilia.org.au/youth/travel/)

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