

With 3 Confirmed Cases of Dengue Fever, V.I. Health Officials Urge Public Awareness and Prevention Measures

Following Puerto Rico's dengue emergency, V.I. health officials stress importance of mosquito control with 3 cases detected

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The V.I. Department of Health is calling on residents to increase their awareness of the symptoms associated with dengue fever, a mosquito-borne illness. This comes in the wake of rising concerns following a [dengue outbreak](#) in neighboring Puerto Rico.

Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion highlighted the importance of distinguishing dengue symptoms from those of Covid-19, emphasizing early detection and appropriate response.

“According to the CDC, dengue viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 can have similar symptoms in the early stages,” she said. “It’s important that everyone understands the difference between the two and how to treat the symptoms of dengue.”

She advised the public to recognize the signs of dengue, which include fever, nausea, vomiting, rash, and various forms of pain such as eye pain (usually behind the eyes), muscle, joint, or bone pain.

The symptoms of dengue typically persist for two to seven days, with most individuals recovering within a week. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, the primary vector for dengue, is most active during dawn and dusk.

“For those experiencing symptoms of dengue, it’s crucial to seek medical advice, get tested with a blood test, and ensure ample rest while avoiding aspirin or ibuprofen, opting for acetaminophen instead,” the commissioner advised.

The Center for Disease Control warns that severe dengue could develop in approximately one out of every twenty cases, with infants, pregnant women, and those who have previously contracted dengue at a higher risk. Severe dengue symptoms, appearing 24 to 48 hours post-fever, include abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, bleeding from nose or gums, and fatigue. Encarnacion urged anyone showing signs of severe dengue to seek immediate medical attention.

In contrast, Covid-19 symptoms range from mild to severe and can appear two to fourteen days following exposure, including fever, cough, and shortness of breath, among others.

Following Puerto Rico's state of emergency declaration due to a record high of 549 dengue cases this year, the USVI has reported three cases. There is concern within the VI Department of Health that cases could increase in the territory. In response, the department has issued guidance for dengue prevention, emphasizing the elimination of standing water and the use of EPA-approved repellents to prevent mosquito breeding and bites.