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## Health Officials Urge Vaccination Against Chikungunya Amid Rising Dengue Cases in the U.S. Virgin Islands

With a dengue outbreak impacting the St. Thomas-St. John District, the V.I. Department of Health encourages residents to get vaccinated against chikungunya this October to protect against mosquito-borne diseases

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The V.I. Department of Health is reminding residents that it is now the season for diseases spread by mosquitoes and encourages everyone to take steps to protect themselves from Chikungunya by getting vaccinated this October. This advice follows a [recent increase in dengue cases in the area](#), highlighting the need to guard against illnesses carried by mosquitoes.

Chikungunya is transmitted through the bite of infected mosquitoes and can lead to severe joint pain and swelling, muscle pain, headache, fever, rash and fatigue. The Chikungunya vaccine, called IXCHIQ, is approved for use in adults 18 years and older and is given as a single dose.

“Vaccination is a crucial step in protecting our community from chikungunya,” said VI Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion. “With the increase in dengue cases, we must remain vigilant and ensure we are doing everything we can to safeguard our health.”

The Chikungunya vaccine will be available at the DOH's Community Health Clinics throughout October. The department encourages everyone, especially those who are at higher risk or frequently outdoors, to take advantage of this vaccination initiative.

DOH's Community Health Clinics locations:

- St. Croix – 2nd Floor, former Caribe Home Center Building, in Castle Coakley. Vaccination is available Monday to Thursday, between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. No appointment necessary. For more information about the vaccine availability, call 340-712-0131.
- St. Thomas – 2nd Floor, Schneider Regional Medical Center, Monday to Thursday, between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m., by appointment only. To make an appointment, please call 340-774-7477.

According Dr. Esther Ellis, Territorial Epidemiologist, cases of dengue, continue to steadily increase particularly in the St. Thomas-St. John District. “With the community already facing a dengue outbreak, the availability of the chikungunya vaccine is a timely opportunity to bolster public health and prevent further illness,” she said.

The USVI Epidemiology Division’s dashboard continues to report an increase in dengue cases. To date, 135 cases have been reported – 96 on St. Thomas, 37 on St. John and 2 on St. Croix.