

V.I. Department of Health Launches Dengue Hotline as Cases Continue to Surge Across Territory

Health Department urges residents to use new hotline for vital prevention tips and resources as epidemiologists report 150 confirmed dengue cases, mosquito control support, and treatment guidance

Health / **Published On October 26, 2024 06:45 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **October 26, 2024**

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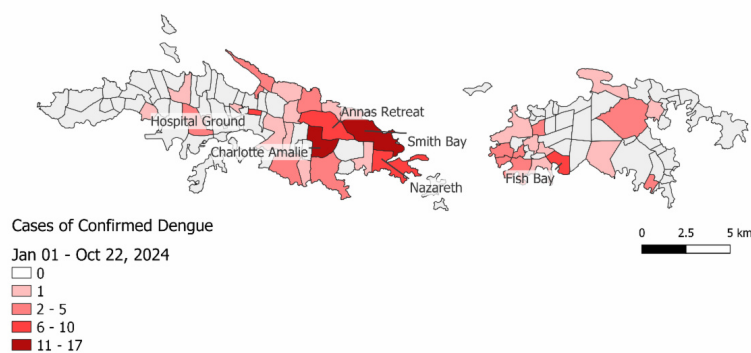
The V.I. Department of Health announced on Friday that it has implemented a dedicated hotline aimed at educating residents on dengue fever prevention and protecting the community as the territory faces a rising number of dengue cases.

The hotline, managed by the department's Epidemiology Division, will provide essential information on protective measures, transmission prevention, and other resources for those impacted by the outbreak, according to DOH.

Residents may call the hotline at (340) 725-5389 or (340) 774-7477 ext. 5647, available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The hotline also allows individuals in hotspot areas, such as Smith Bay, Charlotte Amalie, Anna’s Retreat, Nazareth, Hospital Ground on St. Thomas, and Fish Bay on St. John, to request mosquito control measures around their homes, with services offered through November 8.

According to the department, dengue fever is spread by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which is currently thriving due to increased rainfall across the islands. Health officials stressed the importance of raising public awareness during this rainy season. Territorial Epidemiologist Dr. Esther Ellis reported that the department has recorded 150 confirmed cases of dengue to date, with 102 cases on St. Thomas, 37 on St. John, and 11 on St. Croix, though the true number of cases may be higher due to unreported cases.

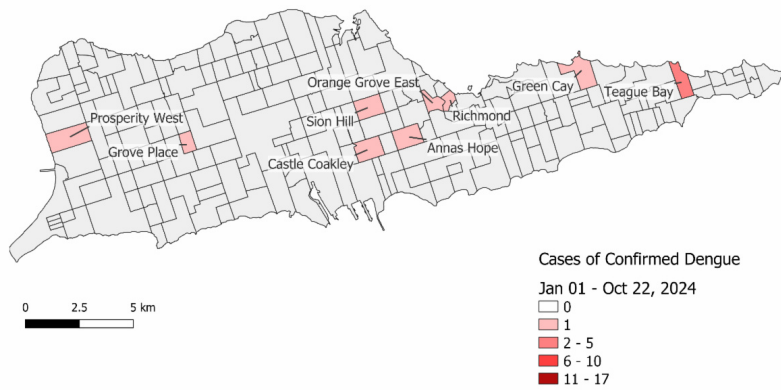
DOH said it is producing USVI-specific dengue heat maps, generated through geocoding, to illustrate where outbreaks are most prevalent and guide control efforts.



“We are very concerned by the rising cases,” stated Dr. Ellis. “Our goal with the hotline is to empower residents with knowledge to protect themselves and prevent dengue transmission. We also provide information on hotspot areas, symptoms, and testing.”

DOH said it has further ramped up efforts by partnering with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Dengue Branch and the Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit. In areas of St. Thomas and St. John, teams are conducting larvicide applications, household inspections, and educational outreach to prevent mosquito breeding and reduce the transmission risk.

Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion is urging residents to remain vigilant. She spoke of the importance of using EPA-approved insect repellent, wearing protective clothing, and eliminating standing water near their homes to reduce mosquito exposure.



Dengue fever symptoms can range from mild to severe and are particularly dangerous for vulnerable populations, including infants, pregnant women, and those previously infected. Symptoms typically last from two to seven days and include fever, pain behind the eyes, joint or muscle pain, nausea, vomiting, and a rash. The Health Department advises those experiencing symptoms to consult their primary care provider and get tested. Residents should avoid aspirin and ibuprofen, as they can worsen bleeding symptoms, and instead use acetaminophen for fever relief.

In more severe cases, known as severe dengue, symptoms may intensify 24 to 48 hours after the fever subsides. Warning signs include severe abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, bleeding, and extreme fatigue. Residents are urged to seek emergency medical care if these symptoms occur.

The Department of Health has committed to keeping the public informed as the situation develops. For ongoing updates, residents can access the “USVI Epidemiology Data Dashboard” on the department’s website, doh.vi.gov. For additional resources on dengue prevention and treatment, visit the CDC’s dengue page at cdc.gov/dengue.