

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Chikungunya On The Rise In St. Thomas And St. John, 25 New Cases Confirmed

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On Friday a V.I. Alert went out warning residents that 25 more cases of the deadly disease chikungunya have been confirmed in the St. Thomas-St. John District.

There has been no confirmed cases on St. Croix, according to the alert.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been assisting the Virgin Islands Health Department in strengthening its effort to better investigate and diagnose potential cases, conduct proper surveillance and help educate health care workers about the clinical management of the virus.

Chikungunya, a mosquito-borne disease, has symptoms similar to dengue. The symptoms generally begin three-to-seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito and may include fever, severe joint pains, often in the hands and feet, headache, muscle pain, joint swelling, or rash.

The V.I. Department of Health is warning anyone experiencing one of more of the aforementioned symptoms to immediately contact a physician and try to prevent being bitten by mosquitoes.

Recently, DOH territorial epidemiologist Ester Ellis [said](#) that the great number of St. Thomas cases is due in part to the high number of tourists who visit the Island daily from cruise ships coming from other Caribbean Islands.

Unlike dengue which has four distinct viral types and three chances that a person who was already infected may contract the disease again, chikungunya only has one, so once the disease is contracted by a person, they are immune for life.

The department also revealed some steps that could help prevent the spread of the disease: