

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Chikungunya Climbs To 902 Suspected Cases In VI, Loses Momentum

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The number of chikungunya cases in the Virgin Islands has risen to 902 suspected, and while that's an increase of about 66 cases [since the last report](#) on October 1, the new results represent a decline in the disease's overall spread in the territory.

According to a report from the [Dept. of Health](#), there are now 55 confirmed cases of chikungunya in the Virgin Islands, 15 probable and 902 suspected. On St. Croix, there are 5 confirmed cases and 51 suspected; St. John has seen 3 confirmed cases and 34 suspected; and St. Thomas, being struck the hardest, has seen 62 confirmed cases and 807 suspected.

The latest report shows that the Dept. of Health's awareness efforts have been moderately working, and it's also a sign that chikungunya may finally be waning in the territory.

The Department of Health's territorial epidemiologist, Dr. Esther Ellis, recently said the territory was experiencing a chikungunya epidemic and gave residents, as well as visitors, pertinent advice to protect themselves from contracting the disease.

They include:

- Use insect repellents — Repellents containing DEET or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Apply repellent only to exposed skin or clothing, follow product instructions carefully. Do not use repellents on babies less than two months of age.
- Use air conditioning or window/door screens to keep mosquitoes outside. If you are not able to protect yourself from mosquitoes inside your home or hotel, sleep under a mosquito bed net.
- Wear clothing that protects you from mosquito bites (long-sleeved shirts and long pants).
- Protect infants: cover cribs, strollers and baby carriers with cotton mosquito netting at all times, day and night, both inside and outside of your home. Dress babies in loose cotton clothing that covers arms and leg.
- Treat clothing with permethrin or purchase permethrin-treated clothing.

Now that chikungunya seems to be on the decline in the territory, the DOH has been keeping an eye on, and warning residents of Enterovirus D68 (EVD68), a fast-spreading, extremely contagious virus that has ravaged many states on the mainland and in Canada. Details [here](#). DOH has also been preparing for possible [Ebola cases in the territory](#).

Image Credit: NPH Medical Services