

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Two New Cases Of Zika, Three New Cases Of Dengue, Confirmed On St. Croix

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ST. CROIX -- The Virgin Islands Department of Health confirmed two additional cases of Zika -- both female -- on St. Croix, bringing the total cases to 4, according to a press release D.O.H. issued late Tuesday. The new count is not unexpected, health officials said, telling The Consortium in an interview on Thursday that they'd expected the number to increase.

[Also on Tuesday](#), U.S. health officials said they were investigating 14 new reports of the Zika virus possibly being transmitted by sex, including two pregnant women. If confirmed, the unexpectedly high number would have major implications for controlling the virus, which is usually spread by mosquito bites.

According to the release, D.O.H. is sending new samples for testing to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's lab in Colorado daily. As additional results are returned from C.D.C., the D.O.H. says it expects that there will be more positive cases. Updated weekly surveillance reports will continue to be distributed on Tuesdays.

In addition, the D.O.H. confirmed 3 new cases of dengue; the first new cases in over a year, D.O.H. says. In 2015, there were 19 suspected and 3 probable cases of dengue diagnosed in the U.S. Virgin Islands, health officials made known.

These cases of dengue highlight the importance of mosquito control efforts in the Virgin Islands, according to the release. The mosquito that spreads dengue also spreads chikungunya and the Zika virus.

The best way to prevent diseases spread by mosquitoes is to protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites, D.O.H. advised. Following recent rains in territory, D.O.H. is urging residents to check their property for standing water, where mosquitoes can breed, and repair window screens. The department also urged residents to eliminate any standing water in and around their homes, as well as taking the following preventive steps: