

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Dept. Of Health To Provide Pregnant Women With C.D.C. Zika Prevention Kits On March 4

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ST. CROIX -- The Virgin Islands Department of Health on Tuesday received a shipment of Zika Prevention Kits from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the contents of which can be seen in this article's feature image. D.O.H. said the kits were to be delivered to distribution points today and tomorrow on all three islands, and will be available to pregnant women free of charge beginning Friday, March 4.

"The kits include health education materials and prevention tools to help prevent Zika transmission to pregnant women. We know that Zika virus can be passed from a mother to her fetus during pregnancy. We are studying more about how Zika affects pregnancies, but because of the association between Zika infection and microcephaly (a

birth defect in which the size of a baby's head is smaller than expected for age and sex), pregnant women should take steps to prevent mosquito bites," stated Deputy Commissioner Kimberly Jones

Items in the kits include educational materials in English and Spanish, EPA-registered insect repellent, permethrin spray repellent for treating clothing, condoms to avoid sexual transmission of Zika, a thermometer for women to screen themselves for symptoms, treatment tabs for preventing mosquitoes from breeding in standing water, and a bed net, according to a press release D.O.H. issued this afternoon.

The free kits will be available to pregnant women at the following locations beginning on March 4:

St. Croix

- Department of Health MCH Clinic
- Department of Health WIC Clinic
- Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center
- Frederiksted Health Center

St. John

- Health Care Connection
- Myrah Keating Smith Community Health Center
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St. Thomas

- Department of Health MCH Clinic (Pediatric)
- Department of Health Community Health Clinic (Prenatal)
- Roy Lester Schneider Hospital
- East End Medical Center

Sample kits are also being distributed to prenatal care practitioners, including local OB/GYN offices, to allow practitioners to counsel patients on prevention tools and educational materials included in the kit.

D.O.H. says its efforts to enhance surveillance and lab testing capacity continues, as well as its partnership with local healthcare providers. Health officials also say community education and outreach through the media and its social platforms will continue.

For local information about Zika virus, call the Department of Health Emergency Operations Center at (340) 712-6205. For more general information about the Zika virus call toll free: 1-800-CDC-INFO.