

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Results Of D.O.H./CDC Leptospirosis Survey To Be Available Within 2 Months

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The results of a Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control Leptospirosis serosurvey conducted territory- wide recently will be available within two months, D.O.H. has made known in its most recent newsletter, issued Wednesday. D.O.H. and CDC employees along with volunteers went door-to-door to determine the prevalence of Leptospirosis, a bacterial disease that first appeared in the territory after Hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017.

The Leptospirosis bacteria can be found in the urine of domestic and wild animals, including dogs, pigs, horses, and rats. It can spread to humans after flooding occurs and fresh water sources are contaminated. Symptoms of the disease are flu-like and include

headache, muscle aches, skin rash, red eyes, yellow eyes or skin, fever, chills, cough, stomach pain and diarrhea. Many mistake the symptoms for other diseases like dengue fever and chikungunya, because of the similarities. If left untreated the disease can result in death.

D.O.H. said residents participated in a two-part process with survey questions and a blood draw. The questions helped health officials determine things like susceptibility and commonality based occupation, activities, residential drinking water sources, and more. Phlebotomists took blood samples back to the Department of Health to be processed for testing.

To prevent the spread of the disease, the department is urging the public is urged not to wade, swim or bathe in floodwaters or any fresh water source that might be contaminated with animal urine. Cuts and scratches should be covered with waterproof bandages, and drinking water should be filtered or boiled.