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V.I. Dept. of Health Halts Use of Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Following CDC, FDA Action

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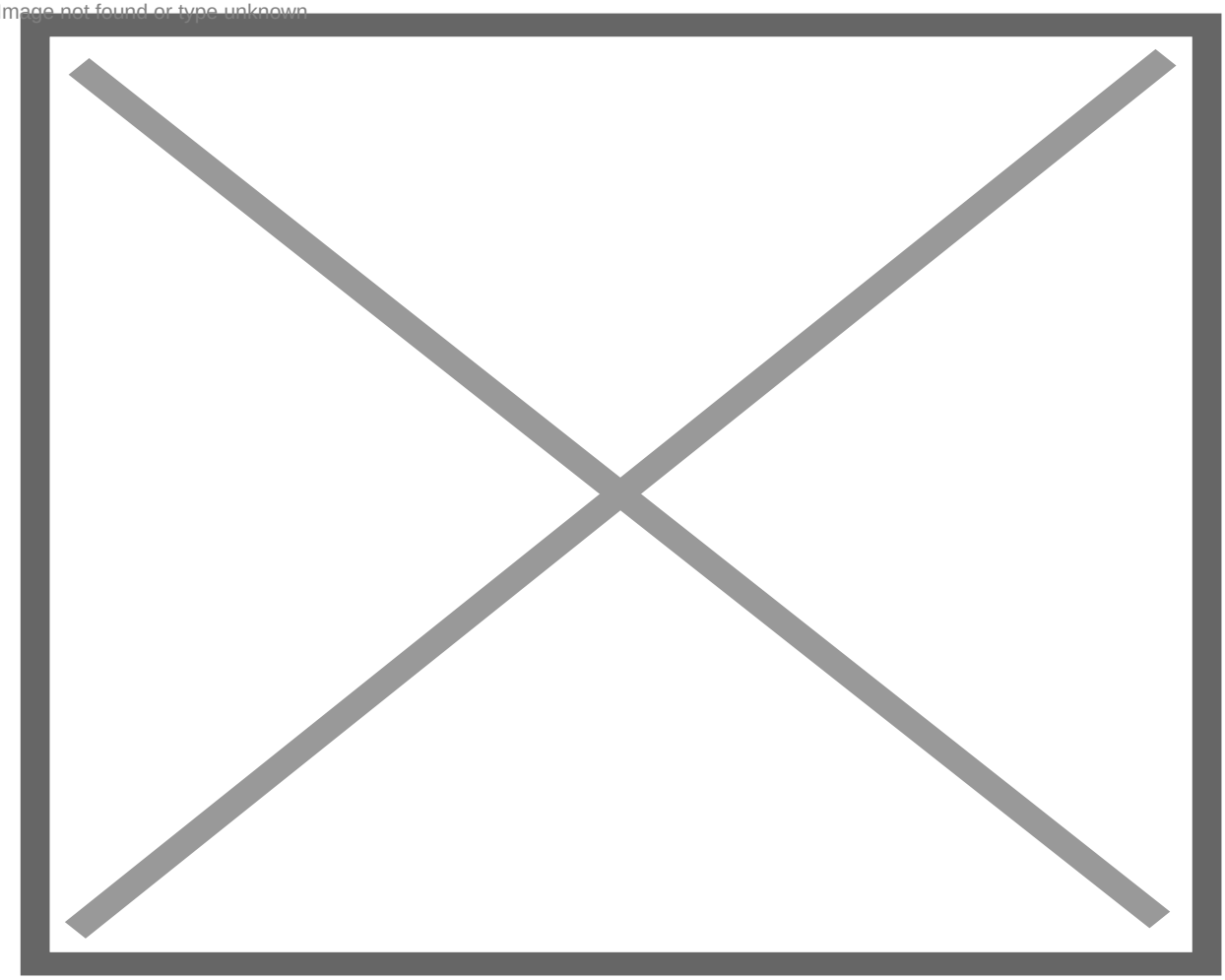

The V.I. Department of Health said late Tuesday it has taken immediate action to notify Johnson & Johnson vaccine providers to mark inventory, continue to store the vaccines as previously instructed, and to continue to monitor and document storage unit temperatures. But the department has halted use of the vaccine following CDC and FDA action prompted by six cases of severe blood clotting suspected to be caused by the J&J shot. One person has died as a result of the blood clot reaction.

The halt was announced by the FDA and the CDC Tuesday morning. The agencies cited severe cases of blood clots in six women between the ages of 18 and 48, who developed the reaction after taking the vaccine. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has been administered more than 6.8 million times in the U.S. The health agencies described the blood clots as rare but severe.

The V.I. D.O.H. said around 481 individuals have been vaccinated with the J&J vaccine in the Virgin Islands. The health department said it used a phased approach to vaccine distribution and administered the vaccine to mostly elderly individuals who are homebound.

"There have been no reported cases of adverse effects among the population that received the vaccine in the territory. All six cases in the United States occurred among women between the ages of 18 and 48, and symptoms occurred 6 to 13 days after vaccination. None of the individuals who received the [J&J] vaccine in the territory are in the known risk group," said D.O.H.

The local health department encouraged all persons who have received either the Pfizer, Moderna, or J&J vaccine to monitor their symptoms after vaccination and report those symptoms using the V-safe app. V-safe is a smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after you receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Visit vsafe.cdc.gov/. The app lets you report any side effects you may experience.

If you or your loved one have taken the J&J vaccine and develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination, you should contact your health care provider. Health care providers are asked to report adverse events to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System at https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html.

D.O.H. said its staff are following up with individuals who have received the J&J vaccine and are closely monitoring the situation nationally and locally.

"Though our mobile strike team has paused its efforts to deliver the [J&J] vaccines to residents, our community vaccination centers are still operational," said the department.

To schedule an appointment for the Pfizer or Moderna Covid-19 vaccine, visit covid19usvi.com/vaccines and choose from any vaccinating provider in the territory or click on the book appointment link to schedule an appointment for the community vaccination centers. You can also schedule an appointment for the CVCs by calling (340) 777-8227.