

The Virgin Islands Consortium

V.I. Dept. of Health Confirms Delta Variant in U.S. Virgin islands

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Staff Consortium **July 21, 2021**



V.I. Veterans were tested for Covid-19 in May 2020 at the Barren Spot Mall. By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR VI CONSORTIUM

The V.I. Department of Health on Wednesday confirmed that the Delta variant of Covid-19 has been identified in the territory.

The announcement comes as local health officials continue to push vaccination, and as cases have seen a marked increase in the territory, [with 165 active cases as of Tuesday](#) and St. Thomas once again surpassing 100 active cases.

D.O.H.'s Division of Epidemiology has been working with Yale University to test samples from positive Covid-19 cases, and recently returned final results show that two of the twelve samples not previously identified in the territory are confirmed to be the Delta variant (B.1.617.2).

New cases continue to rise among unvaccinated individuals, D.O.H. said.

"With this surge in positive cases there is a greater chance for the virus to mutate. Identifying this variant in one district only indicates to us that it has already covered the whole territory as inter-island travel heightens the spread," stated the department.

The Delta strain is now the dominant strain in the United States and is highly contagious. Mutations can make the virus more virulent and could potentially cause it to be resistant to the vaccine in the future, according to health officials. "The sooner more residents get vaccinated, the risk of the virus mutating will decrease," D.O.H. stated.

The health department said "hospitalizations and deaths related to Covid-19 are preventable because the vaccines are protective against all known variants and are readily accessible across the territory. The hesitancy or unwillingness to get vaccinated also harms our efforts to achieve community immunity."

Though vaccines are less effective against the Delta variant, they still offer significant immunity and prevent hospitalization in most cases if a vaccinated person were to become reinfected.

D.O.H. said anyone 12 and older can get the Covid-19 vaccine by walking into any of our Community Vaccination Centers, by calling (340) 777-8227 or by scheduling yourself online at covid19usvi.com/vaccines.

St. Croix's Community Vaccination Center is located at the Nissan Center on St. Croix which is in La Grande Princesse, adjacent to the Honda Dealership and The Paint Shop, on the same side of the street as Food Town.

On St. Thomas the Community Vaccination Center is located at the Community Health Clinic on the 2nd floor at the Schneider Regional Medical Center.

The department's epidemiology hotline remains open 7 days a week from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. for callers to report suspected cases of COVID-19 at (340) 712-6299 OR (340) 776-1519. We are also offering free vaccines at our pop-up testing sites weekly.

Anyone can pre-register for pop-up testing online at covid19usvi.com/testing. The following are our upcoming events:

St. Croix at the Charles Harwood Complex:

Thursday, July 22nd from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

St. Thomas at the Fort Christian Parking Lot

Thursday, July 22nd from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

St. John at the VIPA Gravel Yard:

Wednesday, July 21st from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

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