



**GOVERNMENT OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES**

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PRESS RELEASE

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**VI Department of Health asks the Public to Continue COVID-19
Safety Practices as Cases and Hospitalizations Increase**

US Virgin Islands — The VI Department of Health (DOH) asks the public to follow COVID-19 safety practices as positive cases steadily rise. The highly transmissible Omicron BA.2 variant is the predominant variant in both the United States and the USVI.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Omicron BA.2 variant spreads more quickly than earlier variants, including the Delta variant. CDC expects that anyone with Omicron infection, regardless of vaccination status or whether or not they have symptoms, can spread the virus to others.

Virgin Islands data shows we are presently experiencing higher than expected cases and that is the reason DOH is emphasizing adherence to the safety practices. We currently have 244 active COVID-19 cases. Our positivity rate is 5.62% and we have three (3) COVID-19 positive patients hospitalized at the Schneider Regional Medical Center.

Recommended Precautions:

- To keep the public safe, mask-wearing indoors and in crowded areas is recommended, even when mask-wearing is not mandated by law.
- Maintain a 4-foot social distance or more from people who are not in your household. Wear a mask properly if social distancing is not possible and wear a mask indoors when possible.
- Wash your hands often or sanitize your hands when you cannot. Bring a small bottle of sanitizer with you – on a belt loop or your keys.
- If you are sick, stay home. If you have tested positive, stay home. Stay home for 7 days if you are fully vaccinated and 10 days if you are unvaccinated.
- If you have COVID-like symptoms, stay home. Even if you test negative.

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- If you are in close contact with someone with COVID-19, stay home and get tested. You can still transmit the virus before testing positive.
- Get vaccinated and boosted – and encourage your loved ones to do the same.

DOH urges individuals to take responsibility for their personal health as well as the well-being of their loved ones. If you are high risk or you are close to someone who is considered “high risk” for COVID-19, do not attend crowded events. “High risk” includes people at an increased risk for severe illness.

The “high risk” group consists of the unvaccinated, elderly people, and people of any age with the following: • Cancer • Chronic kidney disease • Chronic liver disease • Chronic lung diseases • Cystic fibrosis • Dementia or other neurological conditions • Diabetes (type 1 or type 2) • Disabilities • Heart conditions • HIV infection • Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) • Mental health conditions • Overweight and obesity • Physical inactivity • Pregnancy • Sick cell disease or thalassemia • Smoking, current or former • Solid organ or blood stem cell transplant • Stroke or cerebrovascular disease • Substance use disorders • Tuberculosis.

If you suspect you have COVID-19 please call the COVID19 Hotline at (340) 712-6299 or (340) 776-1519 for information on scheduling a test. The Hotline is open Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Testing is also available on St. John every Wednesday from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the VI Port Authority (VIPA) Gravel Lot. If you have a medical emergency, call 911. For more information, visit covid19usvi.com. For COVID19 updates, text COVID19USVI to 888777.

[Omicron Variant: What You Need to Know | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/omicron-variant.html)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/omicron-variant.html>

[COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html>

[COVID-19 Information for Specific Groups of People | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html)

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