GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Ministry Of Health Encourages Public to Report Medication Side Effects

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The Ministry of Health and Social Development is encouraging residents to recognise and report suspected medication side effects as the Virgin Islands joins the global observance of Medicine Safety Week from November 2 to 8.

This year's campaign, observed under the theme **“Side Effects Don't Ignore Them, Report Them,”** highlights the importance of reporting suspected adverse reactions to medicines and the role everyone plays in improving medication safety.

Chief of Drugs and Pharmacuetical Services, Mrs. Gracia Wheatley-Smith explained that the media campaign and is driven mostly by short videos with medicine safety messages. “In our first year we did videos with English messages, then we added video with Spanish messaging after two years and this year we have added videos with French messaging. So as the campaign grow, we will add more messages to eventually cover the Territory.”

The observance is part of the international #MedSafetyWeek campaign, which promotes the safe use of medicines and encourages patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals to report suspected side effects.

Medicines play an important role in preventing and treating illnesses. However, they can sometimes cause unwanted reactions. These may range from mild discomfort to more serious health concerns.

The Ministry is reminding residents that recognising and reporting suspected side effects can help identify potential safety concerns and improve the safe use of medicines for everybody.

“The observance provides an opportunity to strengthen public understanding of medication safety and encourage greater participation in reporting suspected adverse reactions,” Mrs. Wheatley-Smith said.

She further stated that residents should pay attention to how their bodies respond to medicines and speak with a healthcare professional if they experience an unexpected reaction. “Reporting these experiences helps us identify potential risks and contributes to safer healthcare for everyone,” Mrs. Wheatley-Smith noted.

Residents are encouraged to follow medication instructions, ask questions about prescribed and over-the-counter medicines and keep their healthcare providers informed about all medicines they are taking.

Persons who experience suspected side effects should consult a healthcare professional for guidance. Serious reactions require immediate medical attention. Persons can also contact Mrs. Wheatley-Smith via email at grwheatley-smith@gov.vg or via telephone at 468-9850.

Mrs. Wheatley-Smith said that persons should pay attention to the videos and forward them to family members, coworkers and friends. Upload them on your face book page, your Instagram and other social media accounts so that others can view the videos and empower themselves about medicines safety.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development remains committed to protecting and promoting the health and well-being of the people of the Virgin Islands through public education, strengthened medication safety monitoring and access to quality healthcare services.

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