



## Enjoy the Beautiful Waters of the Virgin Islands National Park

“Look But Don’t Touch!”

### Help us protect park resources include:

- ✦ Remove all trash when you leave.
- ✦ Do not feed fish or wildlife.
- ✦ Campfires are prohibited.
- ✦ Pets off leash or on beaches are prohibited.
- ✦ Do not collect shells or rocks.
- ✦ Do not touch or stand not on coral or rocks

### For your Safety

- ✦ Do not leave valuables unattended.
- ✦ No surfing or skim boarding in designated swim areas.
- ✦ Always wear reef safe sunscreen.
- ✦ Body surfing is not advised.
- ✦ Vehicles parked on roadway will be ticketed/towed.

### Respect Others

- ✦ No smoking on beaches.
- ✦ No glass on Beach--cut feet spoil vacations.
- ✦ Loud music is prohibited.
- ✦ Nudity is prohibited.

**In case of EMERGENCY DIAL 911**

**From Cell Phone DIAL (340) 776-9110**

**To report a Lionfish sighting call  
(340) 201-2342**

### Corals

Are actually living animals, contact can cause severe damage to the coral and injury or infection to you.

#### **Prevention:**

Always stay a safe distance from the reef, do not kick or step on corals while snorkeling, stand only in sand.

**Symptoms:** Cuts and abrasions.

**Remedy:** Clean wound thoroughly.



### *Things to Avoid While in the Water.*

Virgin Islands National Park and Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument offer wonderful underwater adventures.

This brochure describes some common hazards, as well as precautions and remedies should you come in contact with one of these creatures or plants.

Should you wish to learn more, a simple Internet search will provide a wealth of information.

### Lionfish

Have Poisonous venom tipped spines.

**Prevention:** Do not approach.

**Symptoms:** Swelling, and intense pain. If systemic allergic reaction occurs seek immediate medical attention.

**Remedy:** Soak area in hot water and seek medical attention.



### Jellyfish & Sea Wasps

Not often found in waters here. Avoidance is the best practice. Soft gelatinous bodies with long stinging tentacles that discharge when

touched.

**Symptoms:** Mild stinging, itching and redness to severe allergic reaction and anaphylactic shock.

**Remedy:** Tentacles must be removed from skin or will continue to fire. Bare hands should not be used to remove tentacles. Vinegar may relieve the pain.

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Virgin Islands National Park &  
Coral Reef National Monument  
1300 Cruz Bay Creek  
St. John, USVI 00830  
(340) 776-6201 ext. 238

### Scorpionfish

Excellent camouflage helps them blend into seagrass, coral reef and rocky habitats. Venomous spines line



the dorsal, anal and pectoral fins.

**Prevention:** Shuffle feet when entering the water and not touching the sea floor may prevent injury from a Scorpionfish.

**Symptoms:** Swelling, intense pain. Seek immediate medical attention if allergic reaction occurs.

**Remedy:** Soaking in hot water may alleviate the pain.

### Hydroids

Resemble a feather plant, related to jellyfish and corals, and have strong stinging cells. Find them attached to rocks and plants, particularly mangrove roots, on docks, buoys and mooring lines.



**Prevention:** Be aware of your surroundings and do not touch marine life.

**Symptoms:** Burning, itching, inflammation, swelling and pain. Sunburn and hot water may increase the symptoms.

**Remedy:** Rinse with vinegar. If allergic reaction occurs seek immediate medical attention.

### Fire Coral



Have strong stinging cells and are either blade-like (shown) or encrusting (flat), and are mustard-yellow to dark orange, often with white edges.

**Prevention:** Do not touch any corals.

**Symptoms:** Painful burning sensation, rash, redness, tingling, itching, welts and allergic reactions.

**Remedy:** Rubbing alcohol or meat tenderizer may help alleviate the pain.

### Touch-me-not sponges

Brown or orange, they have fiberglass like spines which contain toxin that imbed in the skin if touched.

**Prevention:** Do not touch any marine life.

**Symptoms:** Burning, itching, swelling and redness.

**Remedy:** Spicules may be removed with adhesive tape. Vinegar may help relieve the burning sensation.



### Eels

Usually found in rock piles, under coral ledges and in caves. Eels are not aggressive by nature but can attack if provoked.



**Prevention:** Do not attempt to touch or feed an eel. Do not put hands in rock crevices or holes.

**Remedy:** Seek immediate medical attention if bitten.

### Fire/Bristle Worm



Commonly found in sea grass, on or under boulders, and coral. Thousands of fine venom-filled, needle-like bristles can break off and become embedded in the skin.

**Prevention:** Do not touch marine life.

**Symptoms:** Pain, burning, itching and redness.

**Remedy:** Bristles may be removed by using adhesive tape. Ammonia may help relieve pain.

### Sharks

Shark attacks are extremely rare in the Virgin Islands. **Prevention:** Avoid waters being fished or where fish are being cleaned. Do not swim at night or at dusk and dawn.

Remove shiny jewelry and do not enter the water if you are bleeding. Move out of the area or exit

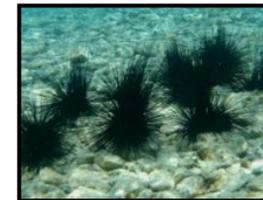


the water if a shark approaches too close, makes sudden movements or appears agitated.

**Remedy:** Seek medical care immediately if bitten.

### Long-spined sea urchins

Found in reefs, seagrass beds or on rock piles on the



sea floor, have long spines which puncture the skin if stepped on or touched. The spines are usually absorbed in a few days. Do not try to pull spines out. May have to be removed by a doctor.

**Prevention:** Avoid any contact with urchins.

**Symptoms:** Redness, pain and swelling.

**Remedy:** Soak the wound in hot water. Vinegar may help dissolve the spines.