

COVID-19 Data Dashboard Explainer

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Whatcom County
HEALTH
Department



What's in the COVID-19 Data Dashboard?

The Whatcom County COVID-19 dashboard shares data visualization in the following ways:

- A “current status” tab shows:
 - The total number of confirmed cases.
 - The total number people who have ever been hospitalized.
 - The total number of deaths of people who have had lab-confirmed COVID-19.
 - The percent of deaths (deaths/confirmed cases).
 - Total number of tests performed.
 - The percent of tests that have been positive, sometimes called positivity rate. There are many negative test results that have not been entered into the state’s electronic reporting system by local labs, and that causes us to show a higher positivity rate than our true positivity rate. Local labs are now able to report electronically, and these records are being entered in the coming days. We expect our positivity rate to decrease as these negative results are added to the database.
- An “epidemiologic curves” tab shows:
 - The number of confirmed cases over time by date of when symptoms first occurred. This means that if a confirmed case is reported to us on a Monday, but symptoms started the previous week, the case will be reported in the previous week on the epi curve. Because they measure different things, the daily numbers in the epi curve and cumulative case count graphs will not match.
 - The number of hospitalizations over time by admission date.
 - The number of deaths over time by date of symptoms onset.
 - For each of these graphs, hover over the day to see the number of new cases, deaths, or hospital admissions that were reported that day.
- A “demographics” tab shows percentages of:
 - Confirmed cases by sex at birth and age category.
 - Hospitalizations by sex at birth and age category.
 - Deaths by sex at birth and age category.
- A “testing” tab shows the total number of tests performed each day and whether they are positive or negative. This chart also shows the overall and daily positivity rates.
 - **Note:** On August 25, 2020, the Washington State Department of Health changed this measure from counting number of positive tests per individual to counting positive tests by total number of tests performed (which could include multiple per individual). The new methodology has been applied to the entire 2020 timeframe. The testing trends are largely the same.
- A “vaccinations” tab shows:
 - The number of vaccinations given in Whatcom County and Washington State.
 - The number of vaccinations given by date.
 - The number and percent of people initiating vaccination.
 - The percent of people fully vaccinated.

Data Updates

The data dashboard will be updated daily, between approximately 4:00-6:00 p.m. During this time, it will be unavailable for about one hour while updates are integrated.

Data for the most recent days are considered preliminary and not yet complete. Cases, deaths, negative test results, and hospitalizations from the past 4-7 days may not have yet been reported and must be verified before we can say that those results are accurate.

Even then, some of our data may change as we learn more, review records, and investigate cases. That's a normal part of our process - making sure our data is accurate - and now you see it happen in real-time!

Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Dashboard: Additional Data

As of March 23, 2021, an additional Whatcom County specific dashboard is available on the website. This dashboard will be updated every Tuesday and will include data as of the previous Saturday.

- **New COVID cases per 100,000.** This is one of the factors that will determine if Whatcom County stays in Phase 3 of Healthy Washington: Roadmap to Recovery.
- **New COVID hospital admissions per 100,000.** This is the second factor that will determine if Whatcom County stays in Phase 3.
- **Percentage of confirmed cases by race/ethnicity.** This shows the percentages of COVID cases broken down by race/ethnicity (where known) and compares it to the percentages of the overall Whatcom population.
- **The rate of cases by geographic regions** - We break down the location of confirmed cases by school district because many people tend to identify their community in connection to schools and school districts. We don't use some other boundaries like zip codes because zip codes cut through cities and towns, so they don't align well with the way many of us identify where we live.
 - Our graphs that share data by school district boundaries show the rate of newly confirmed cases over a two-week period. The two-week timeframe was chosen to match the Washington State Risk Assessment Dashboard and because new infections may take up to two weeks before being diagnosed. The two-week rate of newly confirmed cases allows us to better understand and respond to active infections by showing only those cases that have been diagnosed over the previous two weeks, rather than showing the total cases since the beginning of the pandemic.

Vaccine Data

The following vaccination data will be provided in a weekly newsflash and available on our website:

- **Number of individuals and percent of Whatcom County residents who have received their first dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines, or the Johnson & Johnson dose.** This data is based on the vaccine recipient's county of residence, and may include doses given by providers outside of Whatcom County.
- **Number of individuals and percent of Whatcom County residents who have received both the first and second dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines, or the J&J dose.** Individuals who have received both doses of the two-dose vaccines, as well as those who have received the single-dose J&J vaccine, are identified as "fully vaccinated." This data is based on the vaccine recipient's county of residence, and may include doses given by providers outside of Whatcom County.

- **Number of first doses of Moderna/Pfizer vaccine or J&J doses allocated to Whatcom County providers** during the past two weeks. These doses are distributed by the federal government and arrive in Whatcom County providers through a variety of channels.
 - The federal government distributes doses to the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), which allocates doses to providers.
 - The federal government also directly distributes doses through the Federal Retail Pharmacy Partnership (to national and independent pharmacies), the Long-Term Care Pharmacy Partnership (to long-term care facilities, administered by Walgreens and CVS), the Indian Health Service (Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Tribe), and to Federally Qualified Health Centers (SeaMar and Unity Care Northwest).
 - WCHD receives data about the DOH doses and the Federally Qualified Health Centers during the week that the doses are delivered.
 - WCHD receives data about the Federal Retail Pharmacy Partnership doses the week *after* they're delivered.
 - Because of this lag time in when we receive information, we have shifted to reporting doses for the past two weeks.

What isn't being shared?

There are some data that we are not able to share on the dashboard. This includes:

- **Number of recoveries** - Recoveries are difficult to track. There was no definition of "recovered" from COVID-19 for quite a while, and so we were unable to determine how many people may have been considered recovered from the disease. Also, people who have tested positive for COVID-19 are not required to report to the health department or to their healthcare provider when they have recovered. It's likely that many people are recovering without even realizing that they've even been infected. Some people who become infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 show little or no symptoms and therefore are not tested in the first place. Since we can't know how many people have been infected, we can't know how many have recovered, and any data we give on recovery rates would be inaccurate and misleading.
- **Number of active cases** - Similar to recovery data, active case numbers are difficult to track so we are unable to report this.
- **Detailed outbreak or cluster information** - We don't currently share specifics about disease clusters or industry and employer specific data. We need to ensure that industries, employers, employees, and groups are willing to cooperate with us during disease investigations, and releasing this information can hinder the trust and cooperation needed for our investigations to be effective. We also do not release any details that might make it possible to specifically identify anyone's medical condition.