

Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated: 8/26/21

Overview

This report is currently published weekly to provide a narrative of current COVID-19 trends, data not available elsewhere online, and a more in-depth analysis of COVID-19-related topics of interest. This report references data obtained from the [Washington State Department of Health's COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#) and [Risk Assessment Dashboard](#), [DOH Sequencing and Variants Report](#), [DOH Breakthrough Surveillance Report](#), as well as the [WCHD's Data Dashboard](#) and other COVID-related data.

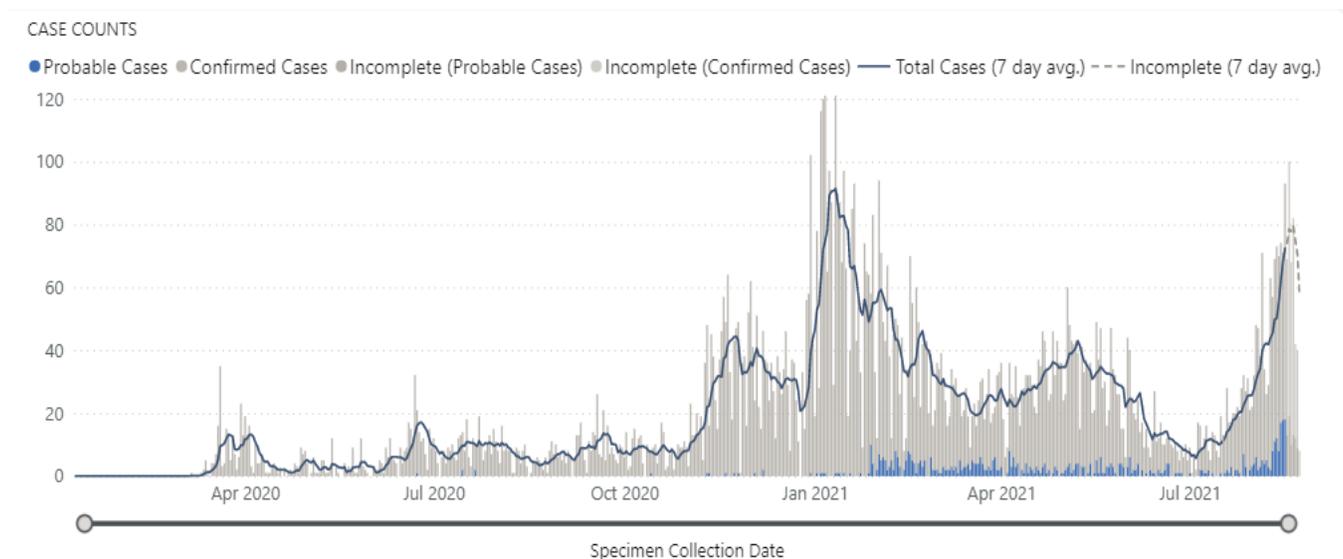
For the period of 8/15-8/21

7-Day Case Rate / 100,000	7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000
243	11

Overview of COVID-19 Cases

Whatcom County saw a total of 559 confirmed, and probable cases from specimens collected August 15 – 21. Since July 4, the average cases per day increased nearly 9-fold. Average daily case counts at this level were last seen in Whatcom County during the winter peak in January. The 7-day case rate in Whatcom County for the week ending on August 21 is approximately 243 cases per 100,000 residents. According to Washington Department of Health (DOH) data, the confirmed cases among Whatcom County residents translates to a 14-day case rate below the Washington State average and places Whatcom among the bottom 12 counties in the state (out of 39 total).

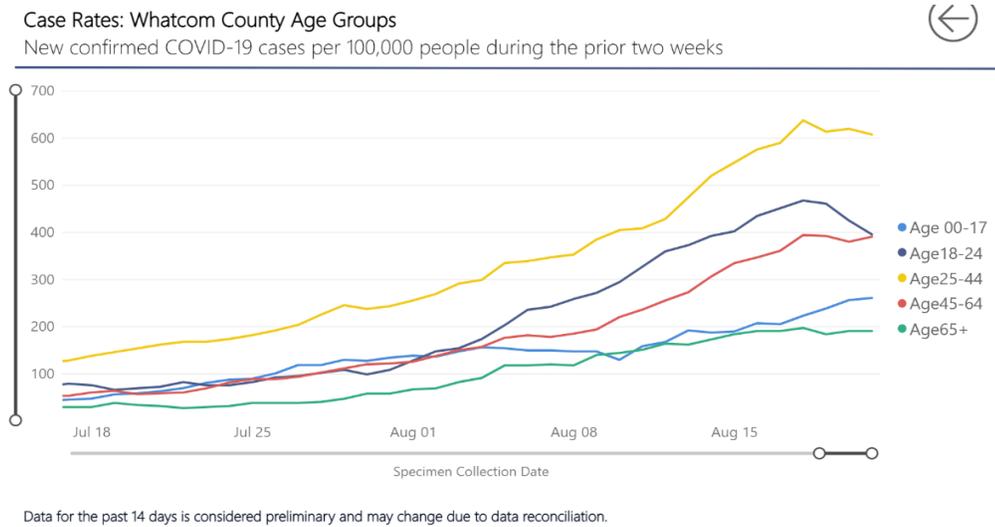
Figure 1. COVID-19 Case Counts per Day in Whatcom County (WA DOH).



COVID-19 Cases in Age Groups & Sub-County Areas

Increases were observed across all age groups in Whatcom County during the initial weeks of August. Residents aged 25 – 44 years continue to have the highest case rate per 100,000, followed by ages 18 – 24 years and ages 45 – 64 years. Increases among the rates in sub-county areas are most noteworthy in Nooksack Valley, Lynden, and Bellingham.

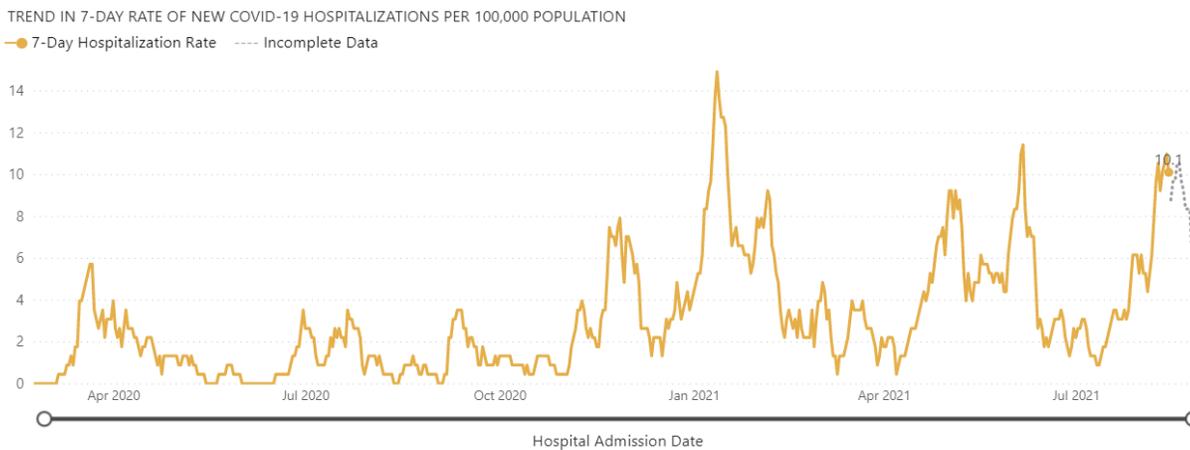
Figure 2. COVID-19 Case Rates per 100,000 by Age Group in Whatcom County.



COVID-19 Hospitalizations

The 7-day rate for COVID-19 hospitalizations describes the number of Whatcom County residents who have tested positive (PCR test) for COVID-19 and have been hospitalized due to their COVID-19 illness. It does not include people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and are hospitalized for other reasons (ex: heart attack, injuries). This rate is useful for understanding disease severity over time. Since July 4, this rate among Whatcom County residents continues to increase. During 8/15 – 8/21, a total of 25 Whatcom residents were hospitalized due to COVID-19 illness. The COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom County residents is still below the state average and is currently 13th among Washington counties (out of 39 counties).

Figure 3. 7-Day COVID-19 Hospitalization Rate for Whatcom County. (WA DOH)



Note: PeaceHealth reports the number of COVID-19 Positive Patients, a measure of the number of people who are hospitalized for any reason/diagnosis and who have also tested positive for COVID-19. Their care requires COVID-19 protocols to prevent infection of others in the hospital, regardless of the severity of their illness. This number is helpful in understanding changes in our hospital's COVID unit capacity, as caring for COVID-positive patients is resource-intensive.

Variants

Genomic sequencing of COVID-19 viruses allows public health to identify which variants of COVID-19 are circulating. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s [SARS-CoV-2 Classifications and Definitions website](#) provides information on variants being tracked in the US.

- In Washington, the delta variant has been detected among 96.6% of sequenced specimens between July 25 – August 7.
- As of August 7, when the most recent positive specimen from a Whatcom County resident was sequenced, the delta variant was detected in approximately 98% of the sequenced specimens.
 - Note: Specimens are not randomly selected for sequencing in either Whatcom County or throughout Washington, and not all of the positive SARS-CoV-2 specimens are sequenced.

The latest statewide variant report can be found [here](#).

Vaccinated Cases (i.e., Breakthrough cases)

A “breakthrough case” is someone who becomes infected with COVID-19 after they are fully vaccinated. A person is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving their final dose of the vaccine series. A person is considered partially vaccinated after receiving one or more doses of a COVID-19 vaccine but is not yet fully protected. Full protection from vaccination occurs ~2 weeks after receiving a final dose.

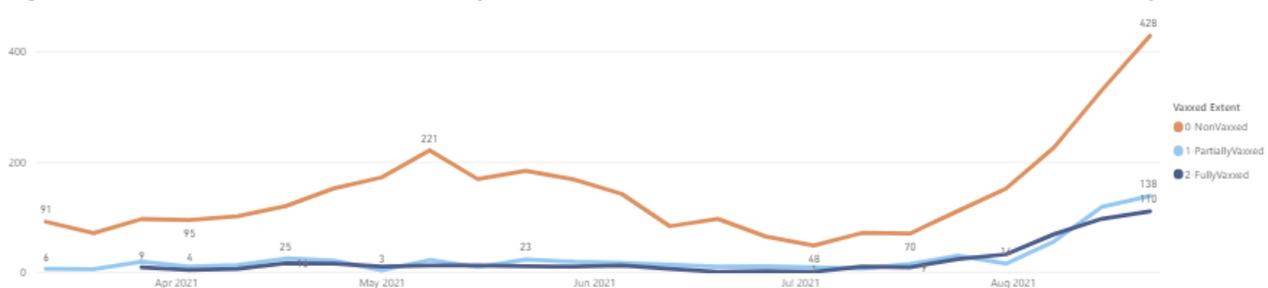
- Among the 559 confirmed cases reported during the past week, the Whatcom County Health Department has identified 147 that meet the state definition of a confirmed vaccine breakthrough case.
- Among total cases detected in Whatcom County residents, the proportion of cases in fully vaccinated residents (breakthrough case rate) increased over the previous week; however, the case rate among un-vaccinated residents remains significantly higher than the rate for vaccinated residents.
- A total of five Whatcom County residents have died due to COVID-19 who were fully vaccinated. There were three deaths due to COVID-19 of fully-vaccinated people during the week this report covers. They were:
 - A man in his 80s.
 - A man in his 90s.
 - A man in his 50s.

Table 1. Vaccinated Cases (Breakthroughs) in Whatcom County

	8/15 - 8/21*	Total**
Cases	147	499
Covid-19 Hospitalizations	4	27
Covid-19 Deaths	3	5

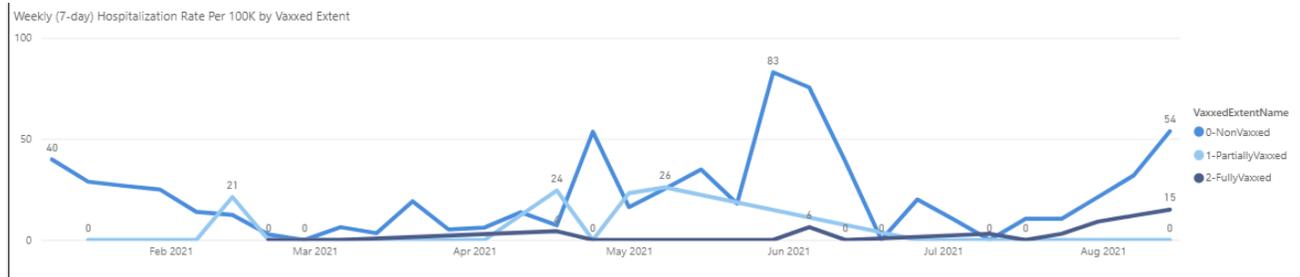
* Suspected breakthrough cases detected by Whatcom County Health Department, not yet confirmed by DOH.** Includes breakthrough cases since 2/1/21 confirmed by DOH.

Figure 4. Case Rates for Vaccinated, Partially Vaccinated, and Un-Vaccinated Residents in Whatcom County.



The rate of COVID-19 hospitalizations among vaccinated residents has also increased since July 4. Among those age 65 and older, this increase is significant. However, the rate among unvaccinated residents of Whatcom County for this age group remains significantly higher than the rate for vaccinated residents.

Figure 5. 7-day COVID-19 Hospitalization Rate for Vaccinated, Partially-Vaccinated, and Un-Vaccinated Residents ages 65 and older in Whatcom County.



The latest statewide breakthrough report can be found [here](#).

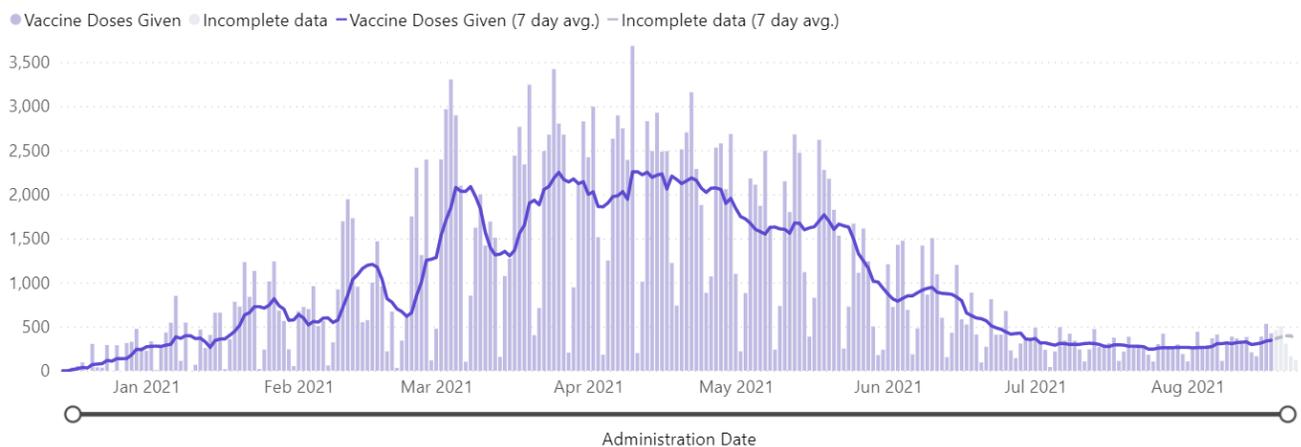
COVID-19 Vaccinations

As of August 21, 57.3% of Whatcom County residents are fully vaccinated, and 62.9% have initiated vaccination. Of the 12 and older eligible population, 65.7% are fully vaccinated, and 72.1% have initiated vaccination. Of the eligible population, there are still 55K Whatcom County residents who have not initiated vaccination.

Vaccines Given

As of August 21, the 7-day average for doses given was 395. This is a 32% increase from the previous week, on August 14, when the 7-day average was 297.

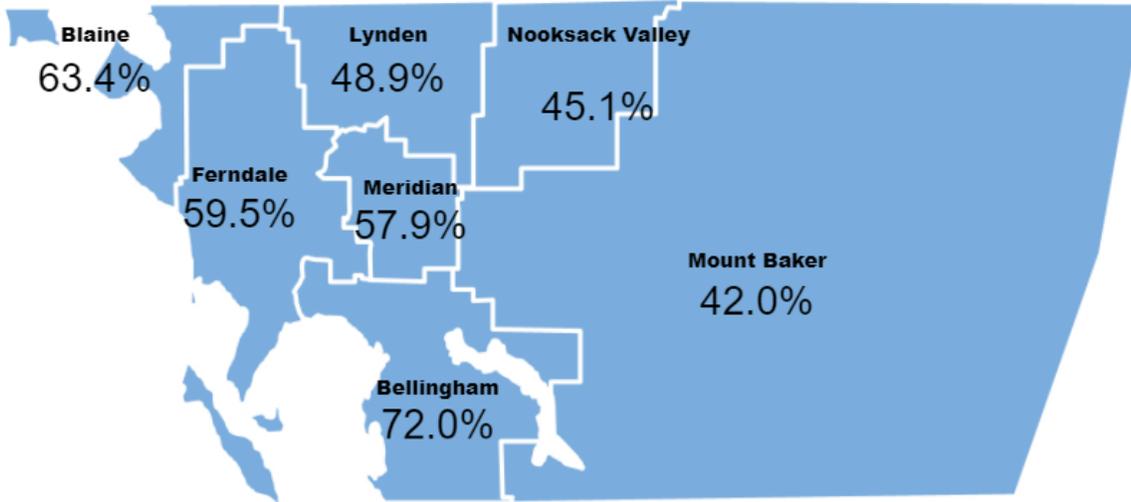
Figure 6. Vaccine Doses given by date for Whatcom County



Vaccination in Sub-County Areas

Vaccination rates continue to be the lowest in the Nooksack (45.1%) and Mt. Baker (42.0%) sub-county areas and among our Hispanic population (38.5%).

Figure 7. Percent of Population who have initiated COVID-19 Vaccination by Sub-County Area for Whatcom County



Whatcom County
HEALTH
Department



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