

Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated 9/23/21 for the period of 9/12/21 – 9/18/21

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](#), [DOH Sequencing and Variants Report](#), [DOH Breakthrough Surveillance Report](#), as well as the [WCHD's Data Dashboard](#) and other COVID-related data.

Key Findings

- Daily case counts appear to crest at the end of August/beginning of September in Whatcom County.
- An increasing trend in case rates was still observed among children, specifically ages 5 – 17-year-olds, while adult rates are showing signs of a slow decline.
- The 7-day rate for COVID-19 hospitalizations appears to have crested near 18 per 100,000. Unvaccinated residents accounted for 71% of the total 17 COVID-19 hospitalizations for this week.

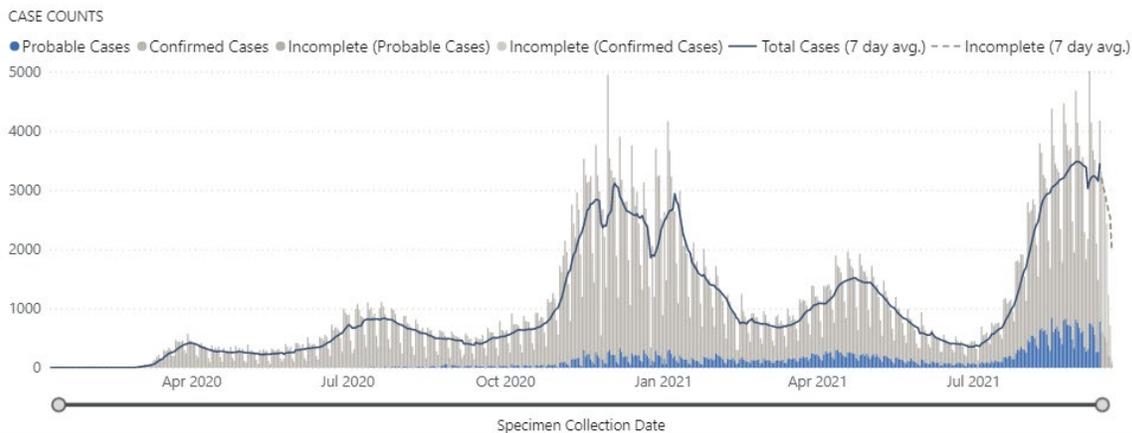
For the period of 9/12-9/18

7-Day Case Rate / 100,000	7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000
211	15

Overview of COVID-19 Cases

Whatcom County saw a total of 487 confirmed, and probable cases from specimens collected September 12 – 18. The 7-day case rate in Whatcom County for the week ending on September 18 is approximately 211 cases per 100,000 residents. This reflects a slight reduction in overall case counts and a continued plateau in the overall case rate. The coming weeks will indicate whether or not the current trend is sustained. A trend in school-age children 5 – 17 years old continues to tick upward even as rates among adults have begun to fall. According to Washington State 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 6 counties in the state (out of 39 total).

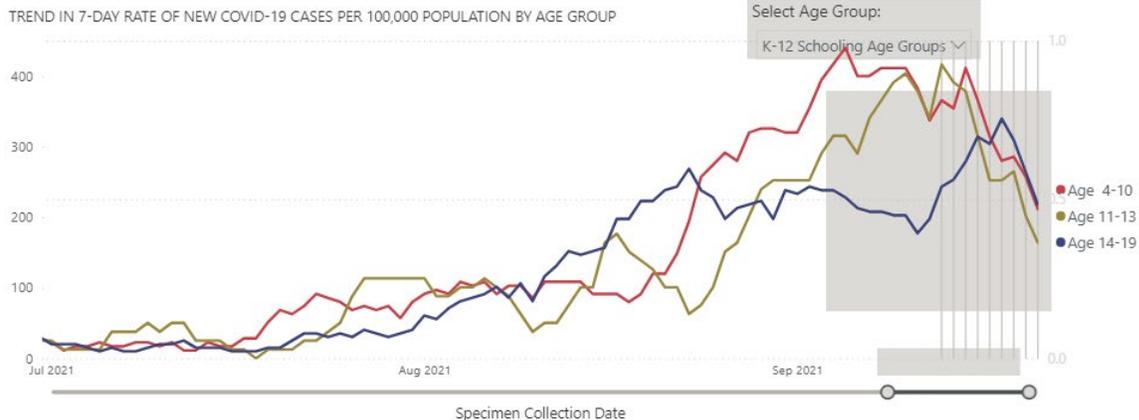
Figure 1: COVID-19 Case Counts per Day in Whatcom County (Source: DOH)



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

While case rates per 100,000 are showing a downward trend for adults between 18 – 64 years old, a noticeable increase continues to unfold among school age children in Whatcom County. DOH is now offering a view of case rates among school age children (4 – 19 years old) by county on the data dashboard (Figure 2). Most of the sub-county areas in Whatcom County are seeing rates that hold steady or have begun to decline in line with the county average. The Lynden area continues to see sustained higher rates than other areas.

Figure 2: COVID-19 Case Rates per 100,000 for 4 – 19-year-olds in Whatcom County (Source: DOH)



Confirmed cases continue to be much more common among unvaccinated residents (Table 1). The 7-day weekly case rate among unvaccinated residents in Whatcom County remains more than 4 times higher than the equivalent rate among fully-vaccinated residents.

Table 1: Confirmed Cases and Hospitalizations by Vaccination Status in Whatcom County for week 9/12 - 9/18

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
Cases	487	138	349

COVID-19 Hospitalizations

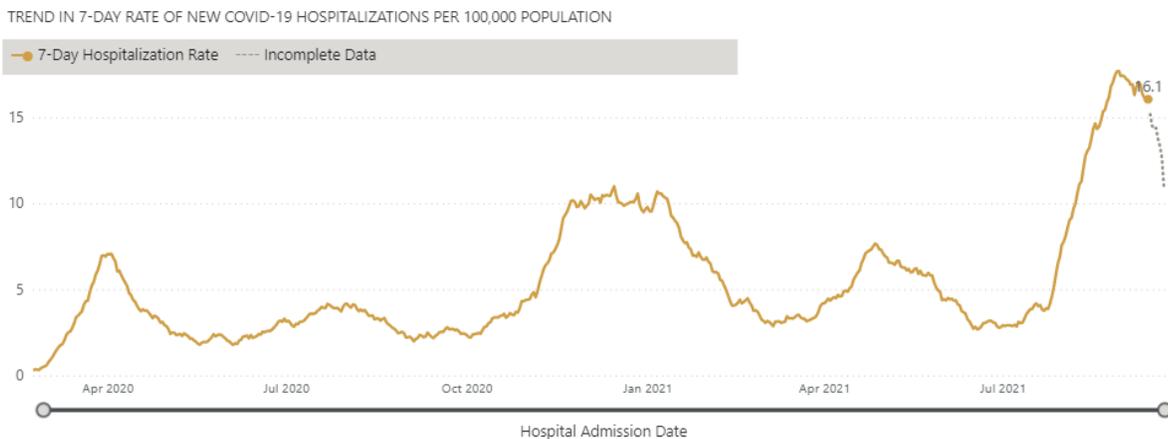
The 7-day rate for COVID-19 hospitalizations describes the number of Whatcom County residents who have tested positive (PCR test) for COVID-19 and have been hospitalized due to their COVID-19 illness. It does not include people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and are hospitalized for other reasons (ex: heart attack, injuries). This rate is useful for understanding disease severity over time. Since September this rate has climbed to a mark that is higher than anytime during the winter surge. During 9/12 – 9/18, a total of 17 Whatcom residents were hospitalized due to COVID-19 illness. Consistent with the breakdown of confirmed cases in the county, more unvaccinated residents continue to need hospitalization for COVID-19 symptoms than vaccinated residents (Table 2).

Table 2: COVID-19 Hospitalizations in Whatcom County by Vaccination Status from 9/12 - 9/18

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
Covid-19 Hospitalizations	17	5	12

According to the DOH Dashboard, the COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom County residents is still below the state average and is currently 12th among Washington counties (out of 39 counties).

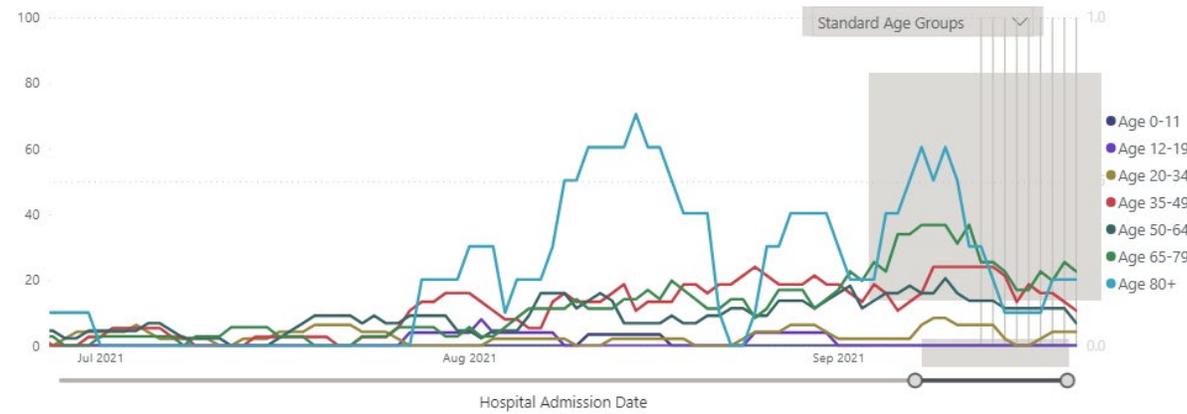
Figure 3: 7-Day COVID-19 Hospitalization Rate for Whatcom County (Source: DOH)



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.

The DOH Dashboard now includes a breakdown of the 7-day rate for COVID-19 hospitalizations by age group (Figure 4). COVID-19 Hospitalization rates viewed across age groups show that older adults continue to suffer more severe disease symptoms than younger adults. However, all age groups above 20 years old are seeing elevated rates for hospitalization due to COVID-19 since the beginning of August, likely from the impact of the delta variant.

Figure 4: 7-Day COVID-19 Hospitalization Rate by Age Group for Whatcom County (Source: DOH)



COVID-19 Deaths

Whatcom County saw two additional deaths due to COVID-19 during the week ending on 9/18. These include:

- 1 vaccinated female, 70-79 years
- 1 unvaccinated female, 90-99 years

Table 3: COVID-19 Deaths in Whatcom County by Vaccination Status from 9/12 - 9/18

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
Covid-19 Deaths	2	1	1

According to the Sept 15 [report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status from the Department of Health, unvaccinated individuals 65 and older are more than 8x likely to die of COVID-19 than vaccinated individuals 65 and older.

In Whatcom County, more than 75% of our 65 and older adults are fully vaccinated, so the death rate of vaccinated people is much lower than the death rate in unvaccinated adults of the same age, even though at times absolute numbers may appear similar. (More explanation is planned for an upcoming report.)

COVID-19 Vaccinations

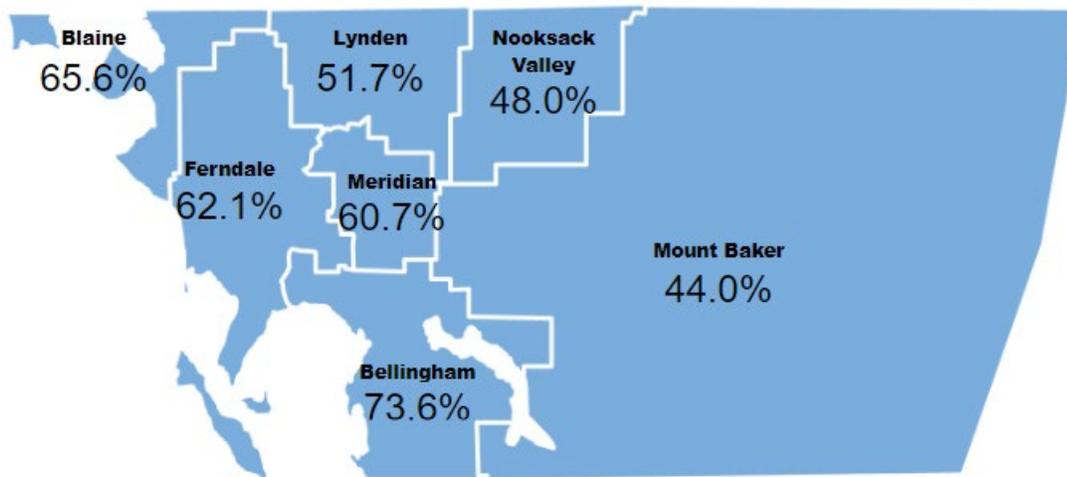
As of Sept 17th, 59.1% of Whatcom County residents are fully vaccinated, and 64.8% have initiated vaccination. Of the 12 and older eligible population, 67.8% are fully vaccinated, and 74.3% have initiated.

Of the eligible population, there are still 50,000 Whatcom County residents who have not initiated vaccination.

Vaccination in Sub-County Areas

Vaccination rates continue to be the lowest in the Nooksack (48.0%) and Mt. Baker (44.0%) sub-county areas and among our Hispanic population (41.0%).

Figure 5. Percent of Population who have initiated COVID-19 Vaccination by Sub-County Area for Whatcom County



Whatcom County
HEALTH
Department



For more information about this report, contact Health_Data@co.whatcom.wa.us.