

Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated 9/30/21 for the period of 9/19/21 – 9/25/21

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 continue a slow decline during the third week of September in Whatcom County. The 7-day average for new confirmed and probable cases is now around 60 per day.
- During the week ending 9/25, Whatcom County saw 19 new COVID-19 hospitalizations; more than 74% were unvaccinated.

For the period of 9/19-9/25

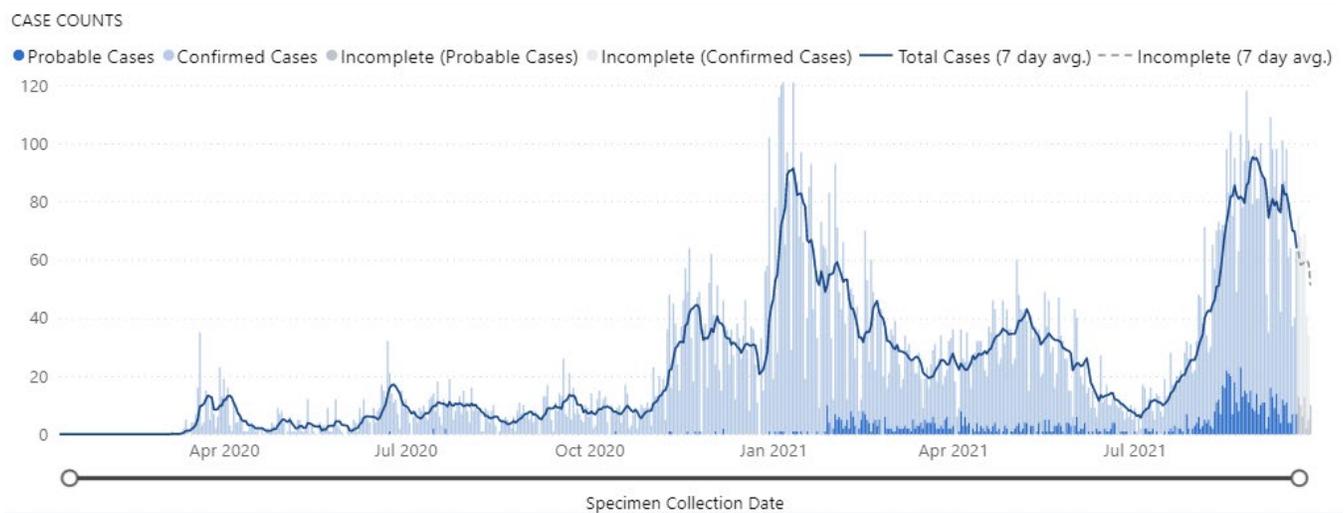
7-Day Case Rate / 100,000	7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000
191	8.5

Overview of COVID-19 Cases

Whatcom County saw a total of 438 confirmed and probable cases from specimens collected September 19 – 25. The 7-day case rate in Whatcom County for the week ending on September 25 is approximately 191 cases per 100,000 residents. The slow downward trend in case counts continued during the previous week. Rates among school-age children 5 – 17 years old also saw a crest during the week ending 9/25 and have begun to decline. 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 lowest five county rates in the state (out of 39 total).

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

Figure 1: COVID-19 7-day case rate in Whatcom County (Source: DOH)



Case rates per 100,000 have started to show a downward trend for school-age children between the ages of 4 – 19 years as seen in Figure 2 from the DOH Dashboard below. A closer look within sub-county areas shows that this trend is being experienced differently throughout the county (Figure 3). Specifically, children ages 5 – 17 in Lynden and Blaine sub-county areas have seen a higher case rate than all other areas. School-age 7-day case rates for all of Whatcom County are now at a level of 200 per 100,000 population; these rates are comparable with rates for school-age children in the larger counties of the region.

Figure 2: COVID-19 7-day case rates per 100,000 for 4–19 year-olds in Whatcom County (Source: DOH)

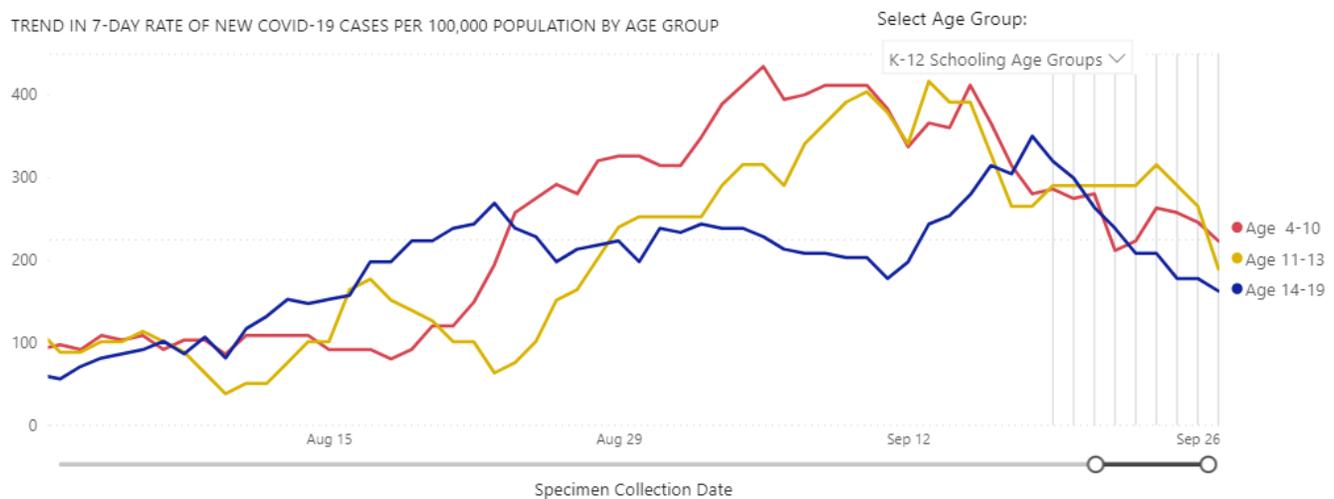
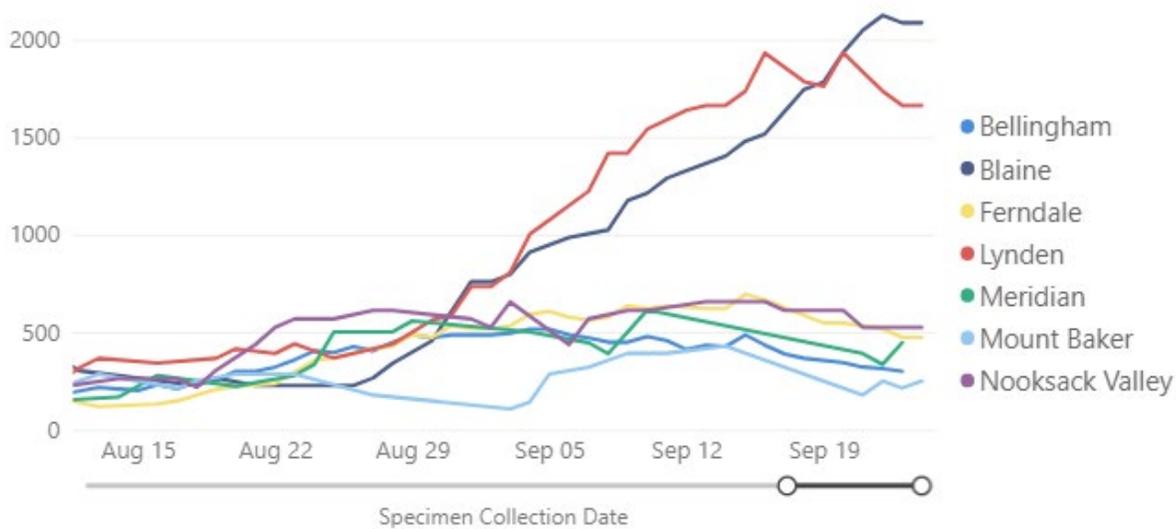


Figure 3: COVID-19 14-day case rates per 100,000 for 5–17-year-olds by sub-county area in Whatcom County



Whatcom observed a downward trend for case rates among adults during the previous week, in particular those between 25 – 44 years old. Most of the sub-county areas in Whatcom County are seeing declining rates as the county average continues to fall. The Lynden area continues to see sustained higher rates than other areas, and Meridian and Mount Baker areas are seeing increasing trends though they still remain below the county average.

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 of 9/19 - 9/25

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
Cases	438	127	311

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 9/19 – 9/25, a total of 19 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).

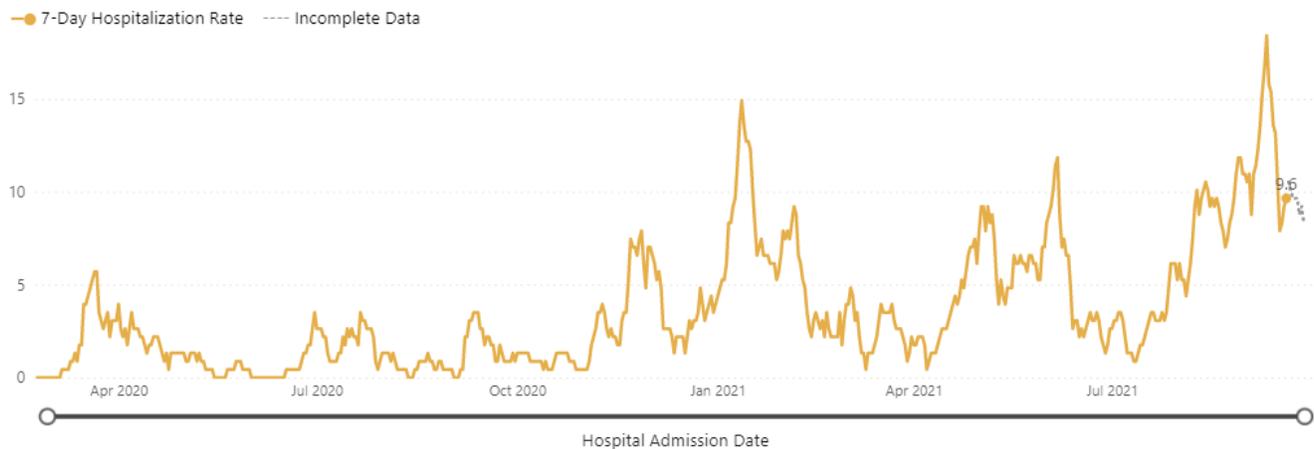
Table 2: COVID-19 hospitalizations in Whatcom County by vaccination status from 9/19 - 9/25

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
Covid-19 Hospitalizations	19	5	14

According to the DOH Dashboard, the COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom County residents is still below the state average and is currently 13th lowest rate among Washington counties (out of 39 counties). More COVID-19 hospitalizations may be confirmed over the coming days among Whatcom County residents so the rate reported here is subject to change.

Figure 4: 7-Day COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom County (Source: DOH)

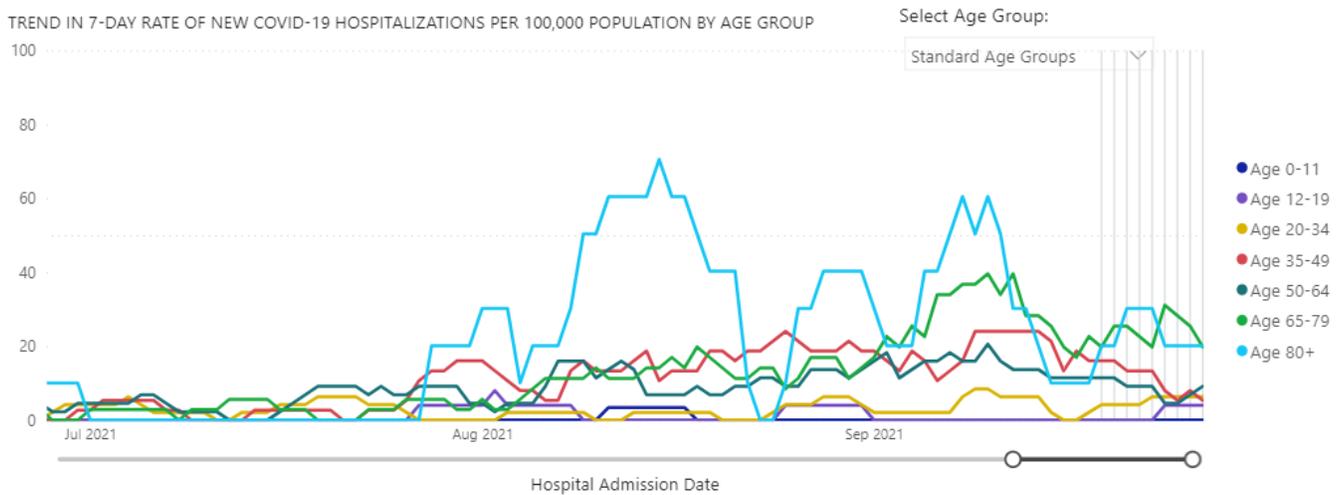
TREND IN 7-DAY RATE OF NEW COVID-19 HOSPITALIZATIONS PER 100,000 POPULATION



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

A breakdown of the 7-day rate for COVID-19 hospitalizations by age group from the DOH Dashboard is shown below (Figure 4). COVID-19 Hospitalization rates viewed across age groups show that older adults (65+ years) continue to suffer more severe disease symptoms than younger adults. Adults from Whatcom County between the ages of 35 – 49 years saw rates for hospitalization due to COVID-19 decline during the week ending 9/25.

Figure 5: 7-Day COVID-19 hospitalization rate by age group for Whatcom County (Source: DOH)



COVID-19 Deaths

Whatcom County had one death due to COVID-19 during the week ending on 9/25. Please note that there are delays of up to a week in reporting deaths;

- 1 unvaccinated female, 70-79 years

Table 3: COVID-19 deaths in Whatcom County by vaccination status from 9/19 - 9/25

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
Covid-19 Deaths	1	0	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, even since the Delta variant has become dominant, the frequency of COVID-19 deaths is relatively seldom and this causes instability in rates when assessing deaths by vaccination status. Currently, more than 75% of our 65 and older adults are fully vaccinated, so even though we may observe similar numbers of deaths among both vaccinated and unvaccinated residents, we can assume the death rate of vaccinated people is much lower than the death rate in unvaccinated adults of this age.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

As of Sept 27, 60% of Whatcom County residents are fully vaccinated, and 65.4% have initiated vaccination. Of the 12 and older eligible population, 70.1% are fully vaccinated, and 75.0% have initiated.

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

Vaccination in Sub-County Areas

As of Sept 25, vaccination rates continue to be the lowest in the Nooksack (48.3%) and Mt. Baker (44.3%) sub-county areas and among our Hispanic population (41.6%).

Figure 6. Percent of population who have initiated COVID-19 vaccination by sub-county area for Whatcom County

