

# Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated 10/07/21 for the period of 9/26/21 - 10/02/21

## 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. Note that information on these topics is rapidly evolving, and the data are always changing. This report uses the most up-to-date data available, and measures may change over time.

### Key Findings

- **Daily case counts rose slightly and are now holding at approximately 67 cases per day in Whatcom County. For the week ending 10/2, Whatcom County saw 466 new confirmed and probable cases; 81% of those were among unvaccinated individuals.**
- **The case rates among school-age children (5 – 17 years) has flattened and these rates continue to be higher than those for adult age groups as a whole.**
- **The rate of COVID-19 confirmed and probable cases among young adults (18 – 24 years) increased significantly.**
- **A small increase occurred in COVID-19 hospitalizations among Whatcom County residents. 22 Whatcom residents were hospitalized due to COVID-19 illness during this reporting week and 82% were unvaccinated.**
- **Eight COVID-19 deaths occurred during this reporting week; 5 were unvaccinated individuals.**

## For the period of 9/26-10/02

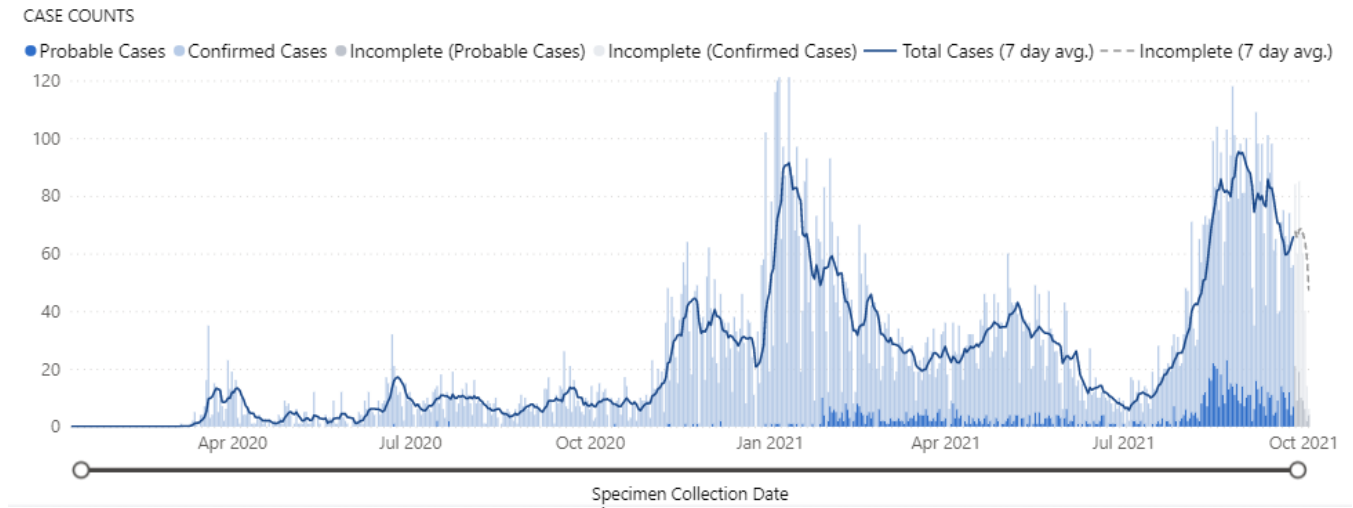
7-Day Case Rate / 100,000	7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000
203	10

## Overview of COVID-19 Cases

Whatcom County saw a total of 466 confirmed and probable cases from specimens collected during the current reporting week 9/26 – 10/2. The 7-day case rate in Whatcom County for this reporting week is approximately 203 cases per 100,000 residents. The slow downward trend in case counts observed through most of September was met with a small rise during this reporting week. Rates among school-age children 5 – 17 years old were gradually declining in the latter half of September,

but now appear to plateau as well. Case rates among school-age children continue to be higher than case rates for adult age groups as a whole. The school-age case rate is discussed by sub-county area in the section below. According to data published on the Washington State DOH Dashboard through 10/3, Whatcom County continues to have one of the lowest 14-day case rates in the state (360 per 100,000), with a ranking of 5th out of 39 counties.

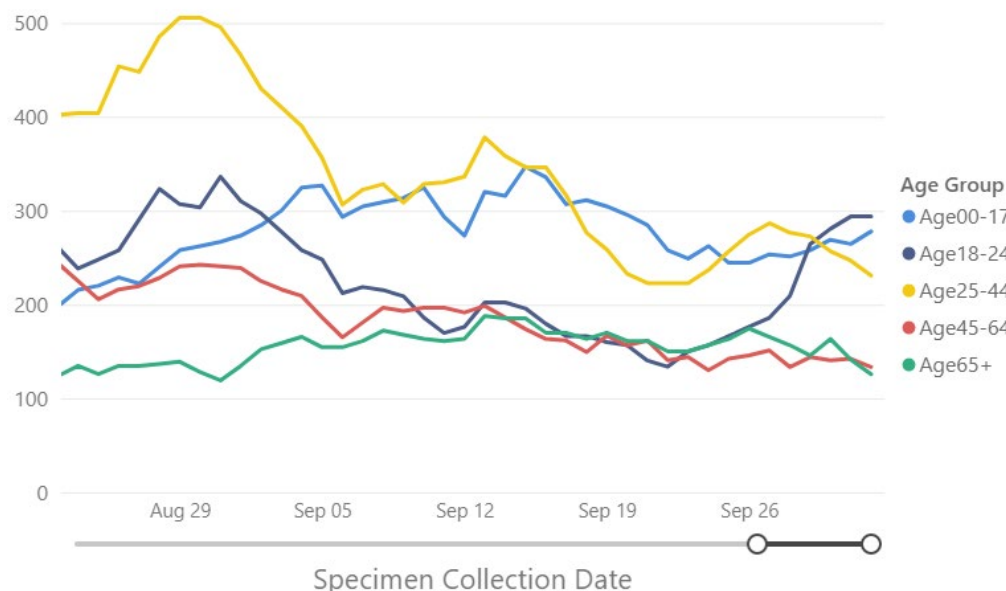
Figure 1: 7-day average for daily COVID-19 case counts in Whatcom County (Source: DOH)



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

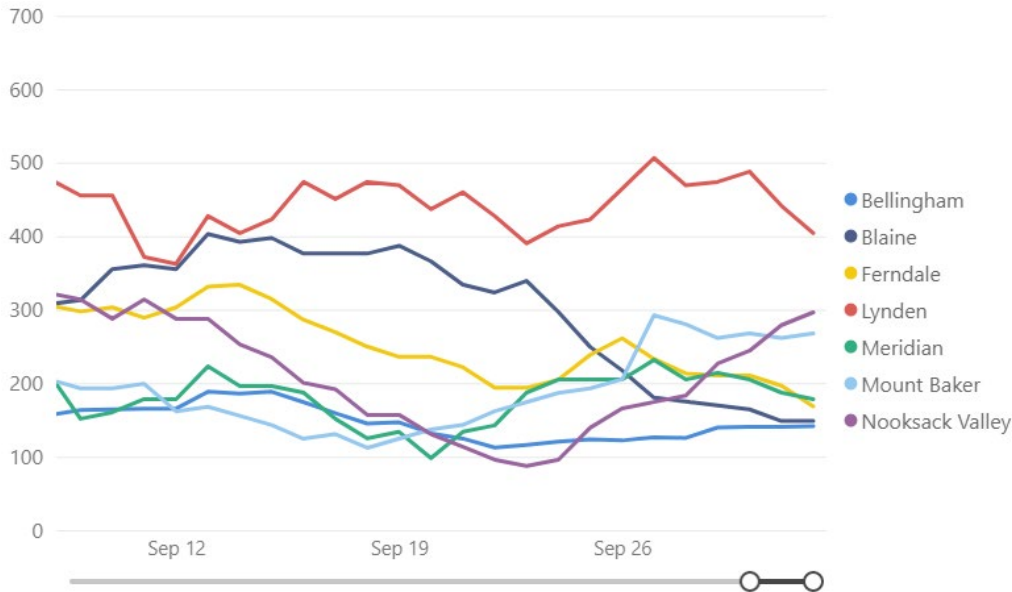
The gradual decline in case rates among school age children has started to flatten in the recent reporting week at a level of 275 cases per 100,000. Cases among school-age children (5 – 17 years) make up approximately 25% of the current confirmed cases in the county. A noteworthy increase was observed among 18 – 24 year olds (Figure 2), and the 7-day case rate for this group has now surpassed the other age groups reported. The case rates per 100,000 for older adults above 25 years show an overall decline during recent weeks; however, the case rate for 25 – 44 year olds remains significantly higher than that of the older adult groups.

Figure 2: 7-day COVID-19 case rates per 100,000 by age groups in Whatcom County



Several sub-county areas in Whatcom County saw a decline in 7-day case rates per 100,000 residents even as the overall county case rate started to plateau. The Lynden area continues to see a higher case rate than other areas, even with a downward trend during this reporting week; the greatest proportional decreases in local case rates were observed in Ferndale and Blaine. Meanwhile, cases in Nooksack Valley increased, as seen in the rising case rate below (Figure 3). The case rates among school age children (5 – 17 years) still remain elevated in Lynden, consistent with the overall case rate for that area.

Figure 3: 7-day COVID-19 case rates per 100,000 by sub-county area in Whatcom County



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 almost 4 times higher than the equivalent rate among fully vaccinated residents.

Table 1: Confirmed cases and hospitalizations by vaccination status in Whatcom County for 9/26 – 10/2

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Cases	466	134	332

## COVID-19 Hospitalizations

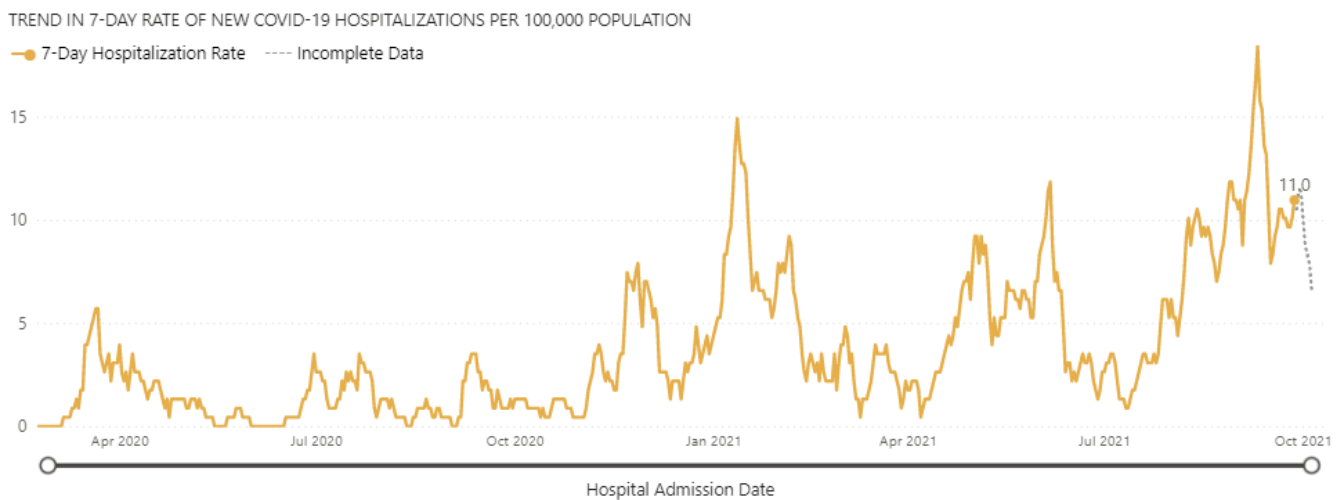
The 7-day rate for COVID-19 hospitalizations describes the number of Whatcom County residents who have tested positive (PCR test) for COVID-19 and have been hospitalized due to their COVID-19 illness. It does not include people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and are hospitalized for other reasons (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. Whatcom County reported a 7-day hospitalization rate of approximately 10 per 100,000 residents as of 10/2. A total of 22 Whatcom residents were hospitalized due to COVID-19 illness during the seven days ending on 10/2. 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). According to the DOH Dashboard, as of 10/3, the estimated COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom County is still below the state average and is among the lowest seven county rates (out of 39 counties). COVID-19 hospitalization data available on the DOH Dashboard is shown in Figure 4. Caution should be taken when interpreting hospitalization rates within the most recent eight days because of the incompleteness of the data.

Table 2: COVID-19 hospitalizations in Whatcom County by vaccination status from 9/26 – 10/2

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Hospitalizations	22	4	18

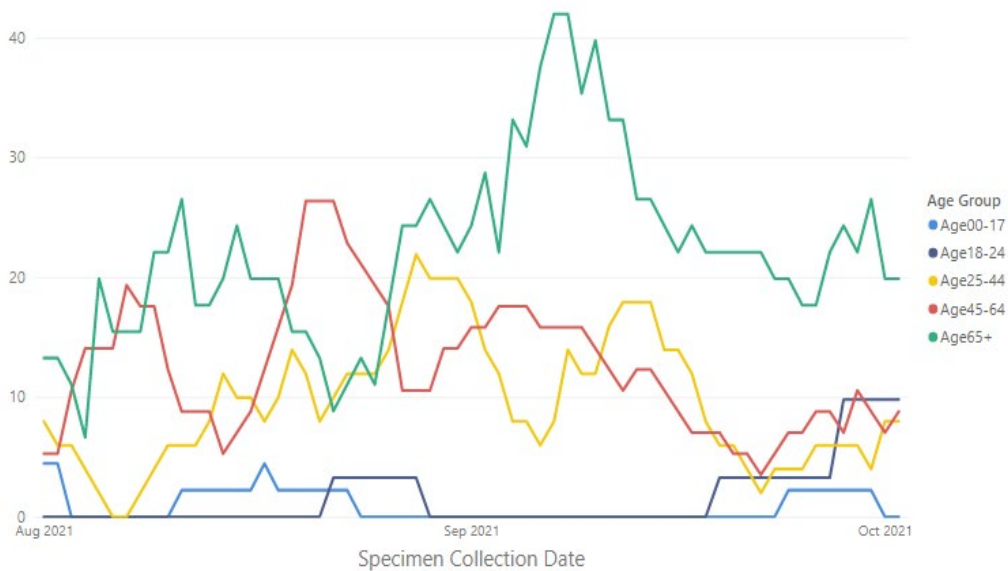
Figure 4: 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom County residents (Source: DOH)



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.

A breakdown of the 7-day rate per 100,000 residents requiring COVID-19 hospitalization by age group is shown below (Figure 5). These COVID-19 hospitalization rates viewed across age groups show that older adults (65+ years) continue to experience more severe disease symptoms than younger adults. However, an increase in the number of young adults (18 – 24) needing hospitalization due to COVID-19 was observed during this reporting week and is indicated by the rising 7-day hospitalization rate below. This coincides with a rise in the case rate for this age group over the second half of September.

Figure 5: 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rate by age group for Whatcom County



## COVID-19 Deaths

Whatcom County had eight deaths due to COVID-19 during the week ending on 10/2:

- one unvaccinated female, 80-89
- two unvaccinated females, 90-99
- two unvaccinated males, 70-79
- one vaccinated female, 60-69
- one vaccinated male, 60-69
- one vaccinated male, 90-99

Table 3: COVID-19 deaths among Whatcom County residents by vaccination status for 9/26 – 10/2

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Deaths	5	1	4

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 8 times likely to die of COVID-19 than vaccinated individuals 65 and older.

## COVID-19 Vaccinations

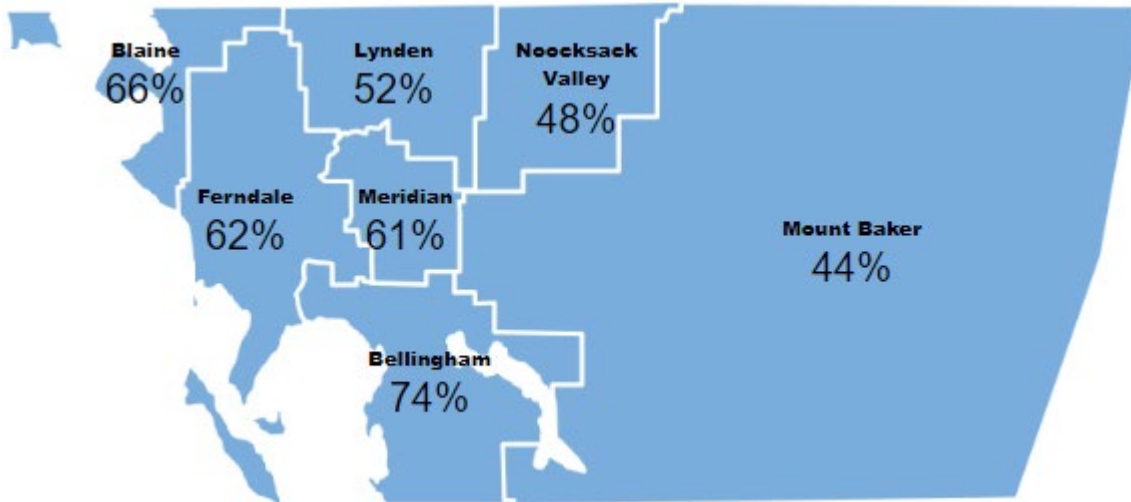
As of 10/4, 61% of Whatcom County residents are fully vaccinated, and 66% have initiated vaccination. Of the 12 and older eligible population, 69% are fully vaccinated, and 75% have initiated (Source: DOH Dashboard).

Of the eligible population, there are still 49,000 Whatcom County residents who have not initiated vaccination.

## Vaccination in Sub-County Areas

As of Oct 4, vaccination rates continue to be the lowest in the Nooksack (48%) and Mt. Baker (44%) sub-county areas and among our Hispanic population (41%).

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



Whatcom County  
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For more information about this report, contact [Health\\_Data@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:Health_Data@co.whatcom.wa.us).