

Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated 12/2/21 for the period of 11/21/21 – 11/27/21

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 in Whatcom County fell during the recent holiday reporting week ending 11/27. The decline may be due to a significant reduction in testing as a result of the holiday and ongoing impact from regional flooding in Whatcom County.
- The case rate among 5 – 17 year olds rose sharply then fell to a level similar to the starting point at the beginning of the week.
- The 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom residents for the past reporting week ending 11/27 did not change significantly from earlier weeks in November.
- The 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rate among residents 65+ years fell below that of younger age groups (25 – 64 years) for the first time since August.

For the period of 11/21-11/27

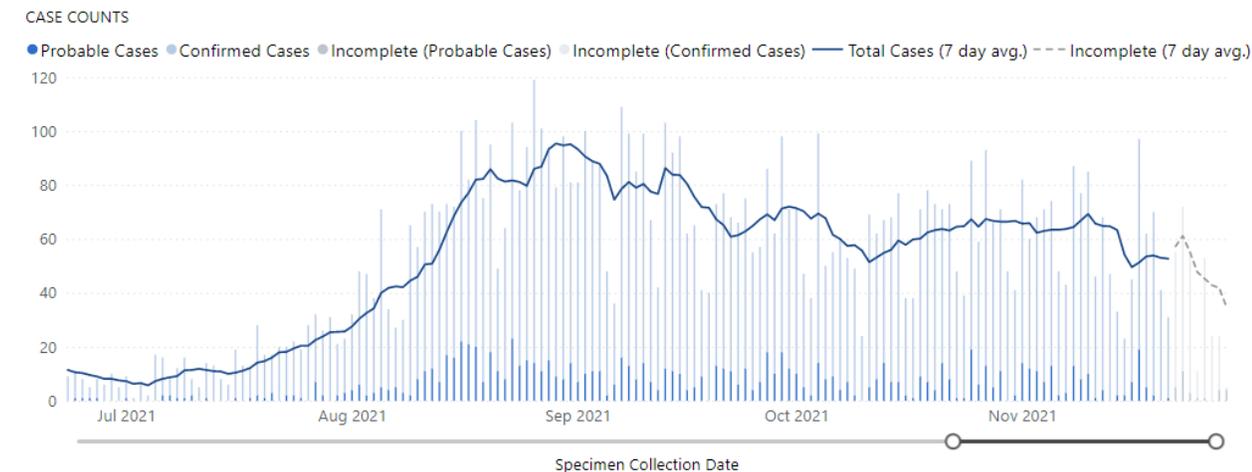
7-Day Case Rate / 100,000	7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000
132	10.5

Overview of COVID-19 Cases

The regional flooding and school closures in Whatcom County has had an impact on COVID-19 testing availability and access. The impact on testing, combined with the Thanksgiving holiday, is likely contributing to overall lower case counts and rates over the past two weeks. As more data becomes available in the coming days and weeks, we will be able to conclude whether or not the current levels reflect a temporary trend.

Whatcom County saw a total of 301 confirmed and probable cases from specimens collected during the reporting week 11/21 – 11/27. The 7-day case rate in Whatcom County for this reporting week is 132 cases per 100,000 residents. This marks the third reduction in the average case count and case rate in as many weeks. The percentage of cases accounted for by school-age children is 24% of all confirmed cases in Whatcom County. According to data published on the Washington State DOH Dashboard confirmed through 11/21, the 7-day case rate for Whatcom County remains above the state average (128 per 100,000).

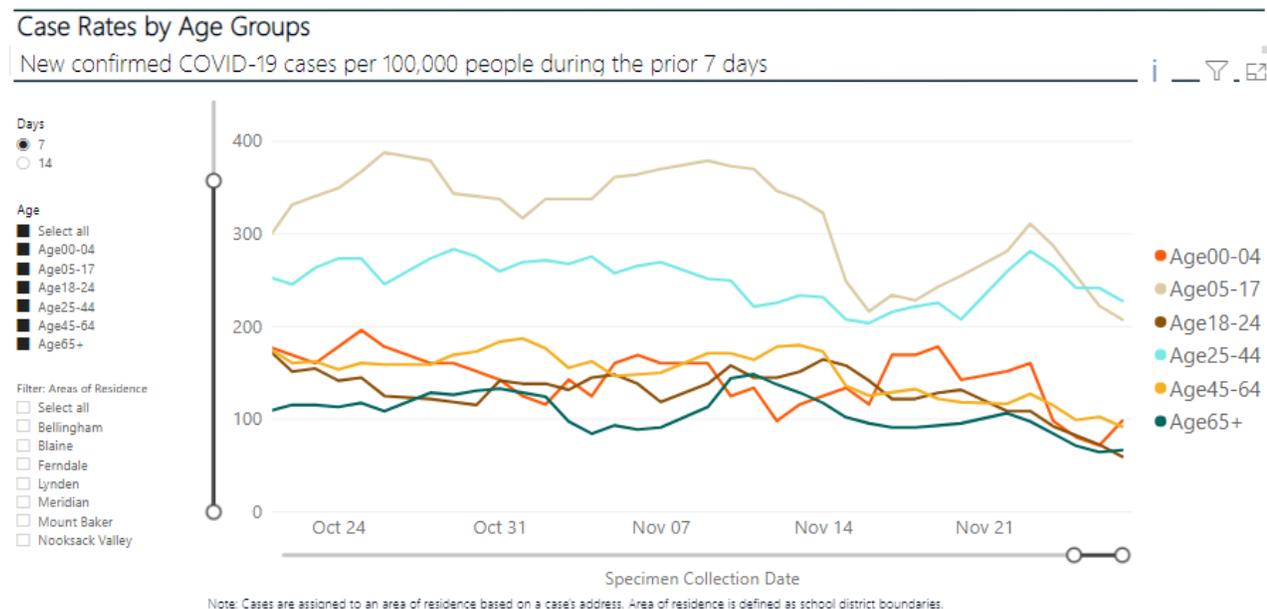
Figure 1: Daily COVID-19 case counts and 7-day average for Whatcom County (Source: DOH)



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

The 7-day case rates for school-age children (5 – 17 years) and middle-age adults (25 – 44 years) rose and fell during the most recent reporting week. The rates for both of these age groups are trending downward, but they remain more than 2-fold higher than other age groups in the county. The case rates for other age groups are also trending downward.

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



COVID-19 Cases in Areas

Among the sub-county areas in Whatcom County, the 7-day case rates range from 85 per 100,000 in the Ferndale area to 270 per 100,000 in the Lynden area (Figure 3). The relative case rates in the Blaine and Nooksack Valley areas saw an increase during the most recent reporting week but remain under 200 per 100,000. A sharp decline was observed in confirmed cases in the Lynden area, but additional data over the coming days will indicate whether this is sustained or a temporary trend due to reduced testing during the most recent two weeks. The 7-day case rates in the other regions declined to a level at or below 100 per 100,000 for the recent reporting week.

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

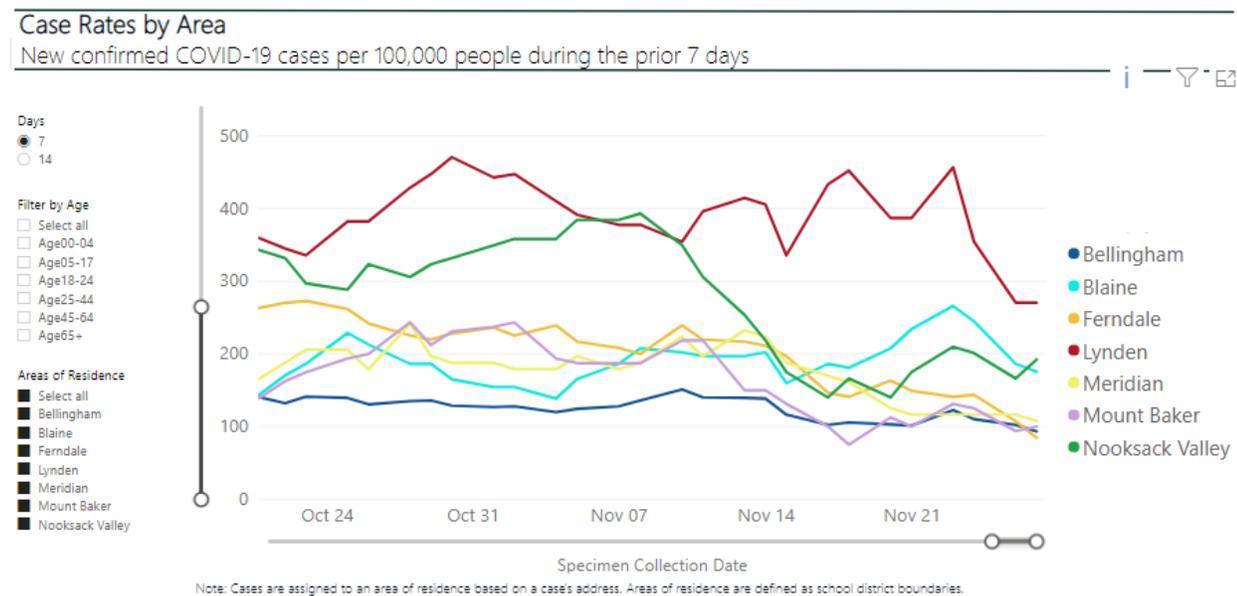
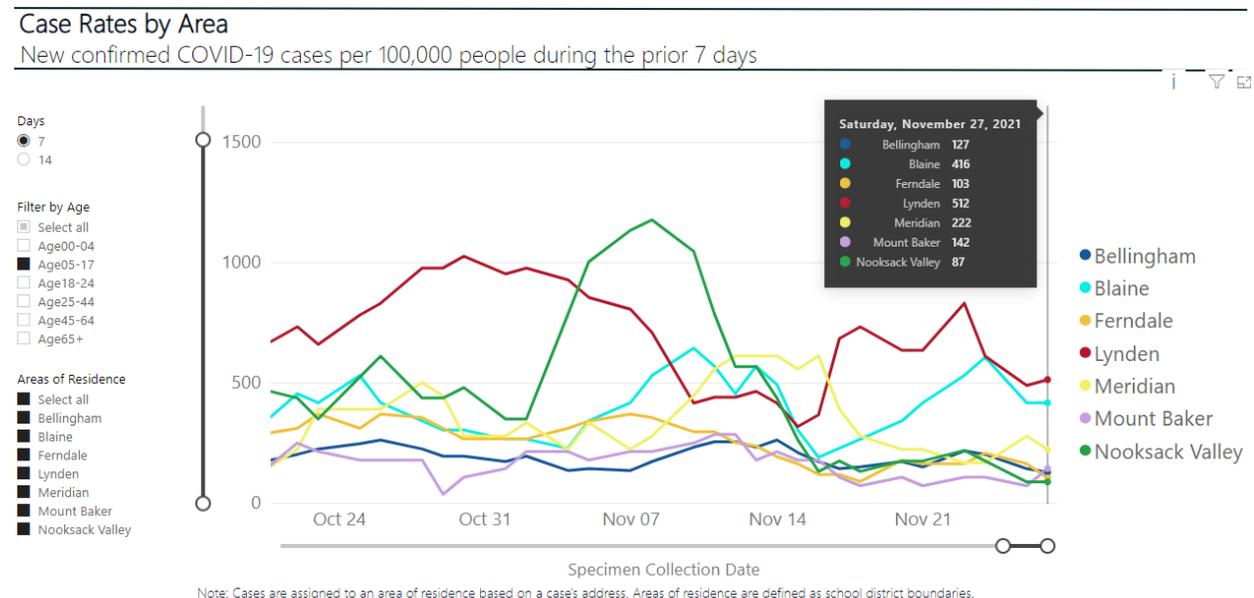


Figure 4 shows the 7-day case rates per 100,000 for 5 – 17-year-olds across the different regions of Whatcom County. Higher relative case rates are occurring in both the Lynden and Blaine areas

Figure 4: 7-day COVID-19 case rates per 100,000 by sub-county area for 5 – 17-year olds in Whatcom County



despite decreases at the end of the recent reporting week. The case rates for these two areas are more than twice the current county average for the 5 – 17 year age group (207 per 100,000). The case rates among 5 – 17 year-olds for the remaining areas of Bellingham, Ferndale, Mount Baker, and Nooksack Valley have reported case rates below the county average for this age group.

Across the county, confirmed cases continue to be more common among unvaccinated residents (Table 1). The most recent [DOH Report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status from December 1 provides findings by smaller age groups for the period of 10/27 – 11/23. Case rates per 100,000 among Washington residents across all age groups (12 and older) are five times higher in unvaccinated residents.

Table 1: Confirmed cases by vaccination status in Whatcom County for 11/21 – 11/27

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Cases	301	84	217

As of the most recent DOH Report on [SARS-CoV-2 Sequencing and Variants in Washington State](#), the Delta variant continues to be the dominant variant circulating throughout Whatcom County and the greater state.

COVID-19 Hospitalizations

A “COVID-19 hospitalization” is a Washington resident identified using case investigation data in the Washington Disease Reporting System (WDRS) or linkage with Rapid Health Information Network (RHINO) records as hospitalized with confirmed or probable COVID-19. The 7-day rate for COVID-19 hospitalizations in this report describes the number of COVID-19 hospitalizations among Whatcom County residents in a seven-day period divided by the county population.

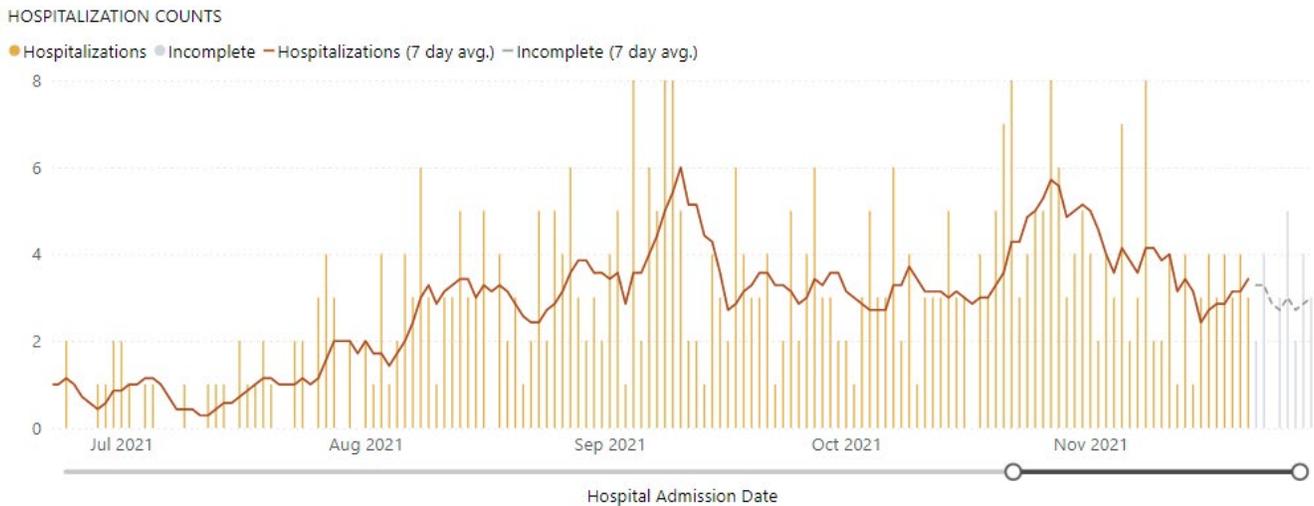
The 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom County is approximately 10.5 per 100,000 residents as of 11/27. There were 20 new hospitalizations among Whatcom County residents due to COVID-19 illness during the seven days ending on 11/27. Consistent with the breakdown of confirmed cases in the county, more unvaccinated residents continue to need hospitalization for COVID-19 symptoms than vaccinated residents (Table 2). The number of hospitalizations among older residents 65 years and above fell during the recent week ending 11/27. For the first time since August, the number of individuals 65 years and above requiring hospitalization due to COVID-19 symptoms was less than younger age groups. Conversely, increasing hospitalization rates were observed among residents ages 25 – 64 years. According to the DOH Dashboard with data confirmed through 11/21, the estimated COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom County is above the state average of 6.7 hospitalizations per 100,000 population.

Table 2: COVID-19 hospitalizations in Whatcom County by vaccination status from 11/21 – 11/27

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Hospitalizations	20	4	16

COVID-19 hospitalization data available on the DOH Dashboard is shown in Figure 5. Caution should be taken when interpreting hospitalization rates within the most recent eight days because of the incompleteness of the data (noted with a dashed line).

Figure 5: COVID-19 hospitalization counts for Whatcom County residents with confirmed data through 11/21 (Source: DOH)



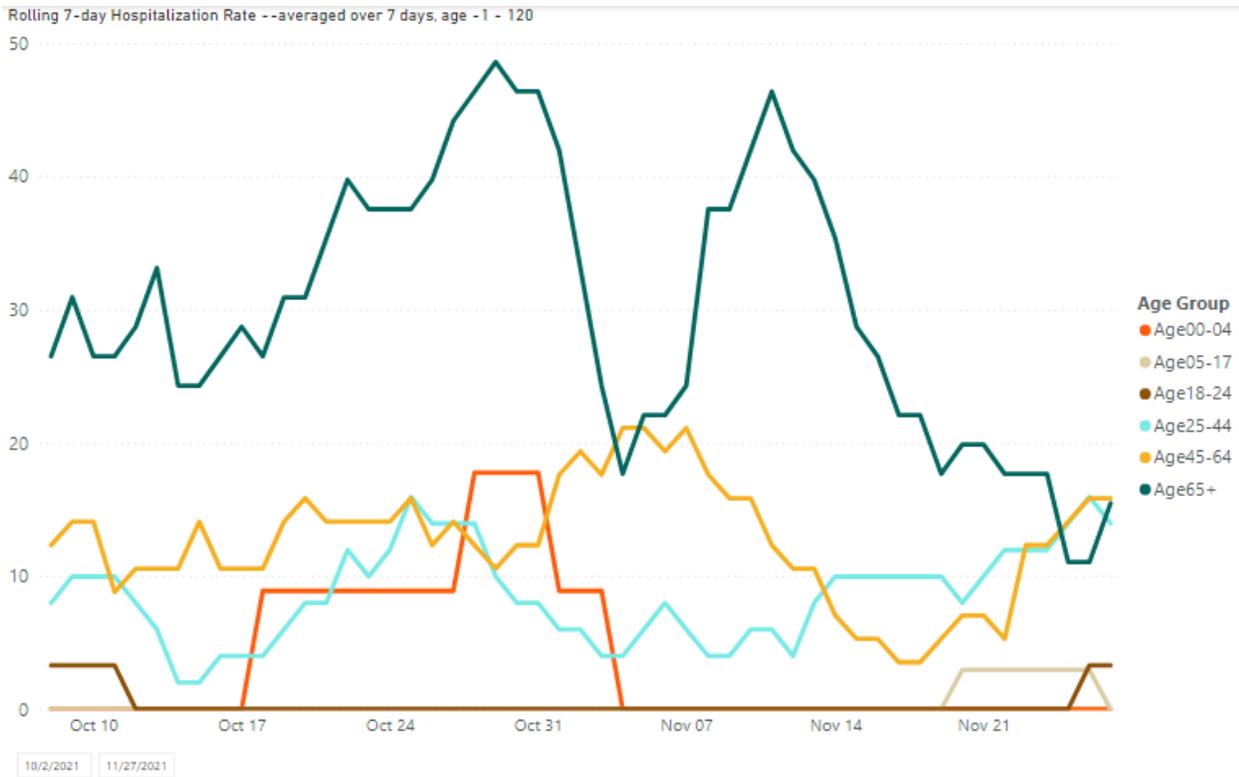
Note: PeaceHealth reports the number of COVID-19 positive patients, a measure of the number of people who are hospitalized for any reason/diagnosis and who have also tested positive for COVID-19. Their care requires COVID-19 protocols to prevent infection of others in the hospital, regardless of the 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 COVID-19 hospitalization rate per 100,000 residents by age group and specimen collection date in Whatcom County is shown in Figure 6. The relatively high rate of hospitalizations among those 65 years and above has declined over the most recent two week period ending 11/27.

According to the December 1 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 10/20 to 11/16 suggests vaccinated individuals continue to be at much lower risk for hospitalization due to COVID-19 than the unvaccinated population. Hospitalization rates among the youngest age cohort eligible for vaccination (12 – 34 years) are 17 times higher in the unvaccinated population than in the fully vaccinated population. The difference in rates increases to 18 times higher for unvaccinated 35 – 64 year olds. For the oldest cohort 65 years

and above, the rate of COVID-19 hospitalization is ten times higher in the unvaccinated population than in the vaccinated population.

Figure 6: 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rates by age group for Whatcom County



COVID-19 Deaths

Whatcom County saw four deaths due to COVID-19 during the two weeks ending on 11/27 since the last report (Table 3):

- One unvaccinated male, 50-59 years
- One unvaccinated male, 80-89 years
- One vaccinated male, 70-79 years
- One vaccinated male, 80-89 years

Table 3. Summary of COVID-19 deaths among Whatcom County residents by vaccination status for 11/14 – 11/27.

COVID-19 Deaths	Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
Weeks 11/14 – 11/27	4	2	2

These numbers are preliminary; WCHD may not yet have been notified of other deaths for this reporting week. The cumulative count for COVID-19 deaths for vaccinated Whatcom County residents is 26, and the overall count for COVID-19 deaths is 176.

According to the December 1 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 10/6 to 11/2 suggests that for individuals 65 and older, unvaccinated individuals are nine times more likely to die of COVID-19 than vaccinated individuals.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

The percent coverage for COVID-19 vaccinations among the population is displayed in Table 4. Of the eligible population (5+ years), there are 58,000 Whatcom County residents who have not initiated vaccination. The eligible population of 5+ years in Whatcom County includes an additional 17,807 individuals compared to the population 12+.

Table 4. Percent of population who are initiating vaccination and fully vaccinated in Whatcom County.

	Initiating (%)	Fully Vaccinated (%)
Total Population	69.6	62.4
Population 5+	73.2	65.6
Population 12+	78.0	71.9

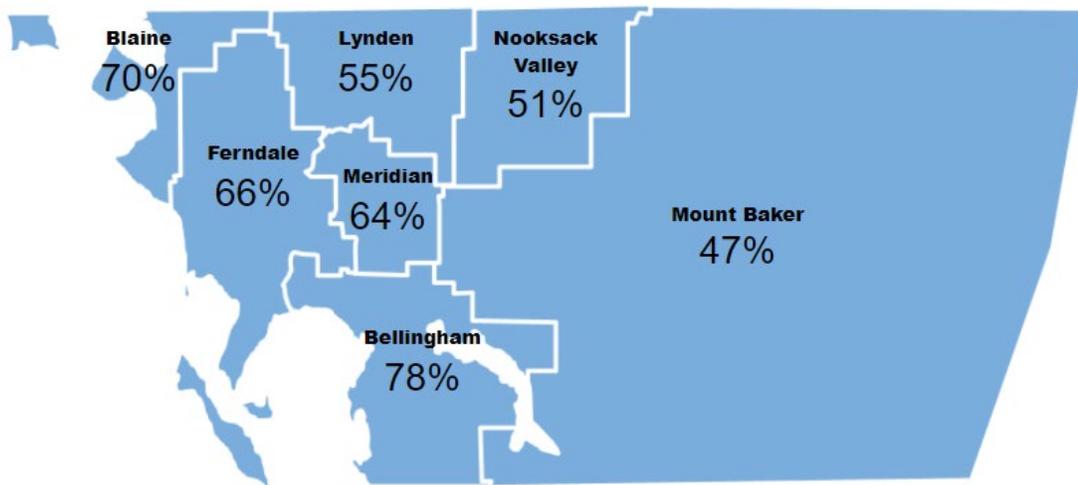
As of Nov. 29, the number of pediatric vaccinations received in Whatcom County is 3,577, accounting for 20% of the eligible population in the 5 – 11 year-old age group.

As of 11/30, the total number of booster doses administered to Whatcom residents is 34,897.

Vaccination in Sub-County Areas

As of 11/27, vaccination rates among the total population continue to be the lowest in the Nooksack (51%) and Mt. Baker (47%) sub-county areas and among our Hispanic population (47%).

Figure 7. Percent of total 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.