

Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated 12/09/21 for the period of 11/28/21 – 12/04/21

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 rebounded following the holiday and during the reporting week ending 12/04.
- The case rates among all age groups increased during the most recent reporting week, however the percentage of cases accounted for by 5 – 17 year olds fell slightly to 22% of all confirmed cases.
- The 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom residents increased during the past reporting week ending 12/04.
- COVID-19 hospitalizations among residents 65+ years increased during the most recent reporting week. Nearly half of reported hospitalizations were among residents from this age group.
- The number of 5 – 11 year olds in Whatcom County who initiated vaccination rose to 4,028 children (23%).

For the period of 11/28-12/04

7-Day Case Rate / 100,000	7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000
209	13.6

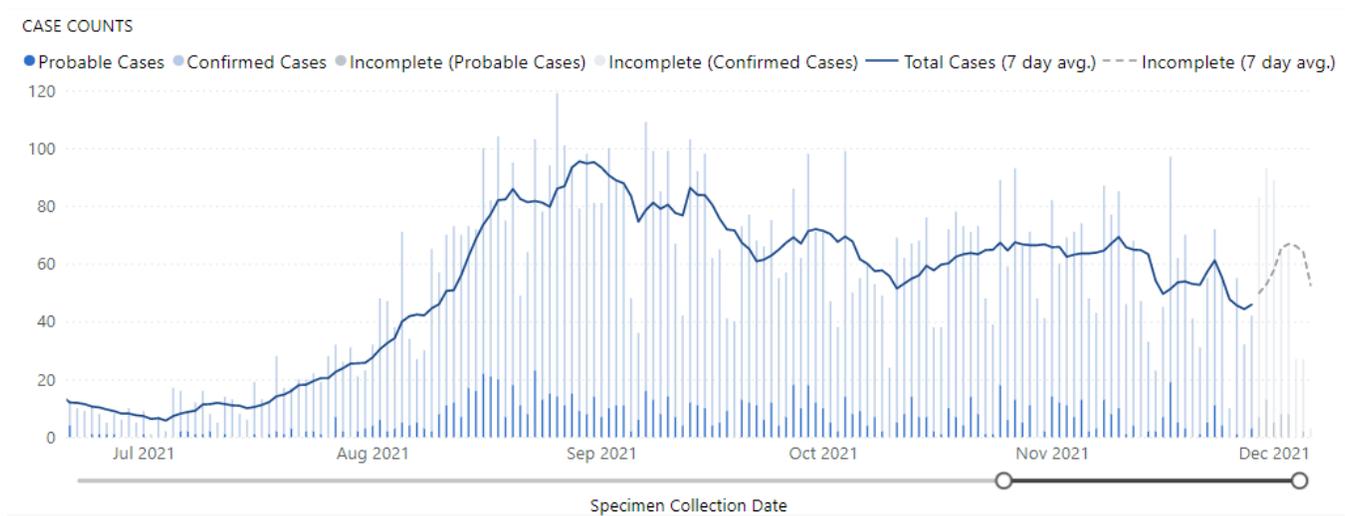
Overview of COVID-19 Cases

Following the Thanksgiving holiday and regional flooding, the COVID-19 case counts rebounded in Whatcom County. It is too soon to know how the impact of recent events (such as holiday gatherings) will affect cases going forward. Whatcom County saw an unusually low number of tests between

November 14 and 27, and it is possible that we are now seeing a more accurate description of recent virus activity.

Whatcom County saw a total of 476 confirmed and probable cases from specimens collected during the reporting week 11/28 – 12/04. The 7-day case rate in Whatcom County for this reporting week is 209 cases per 100,000 residents. This reflects a steep increase from 135 per 100,000 the previous reporting week. The percentage of cases accounted for by school-age children is 22% of all confirmed cases in Whatcom County. According to data published on the Washington State DOH Dashboard confirmed through 11/28, the 7-day case rate for Whatcom County remains above the state average (104 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 case rates across all age groups increased over the most recent reporting week ending 12/04 (Figure 2). The county saw significant increases in the case rates among 0 – 4 year olds and 18 – 24 year olds. Cases among 0 – 4 year old residents were reported in multiple sub-county areas however, the case rate for this age group at the end of this week ending 12/04 (231 per 100,000) is the highest since the beginning of September. The 7-day case rates for school-age children (5 – 17 years) and middle-age adults (25 – 44 years) both rose during the most recent reporting week. The rates for both of these age groups remain above the county average.

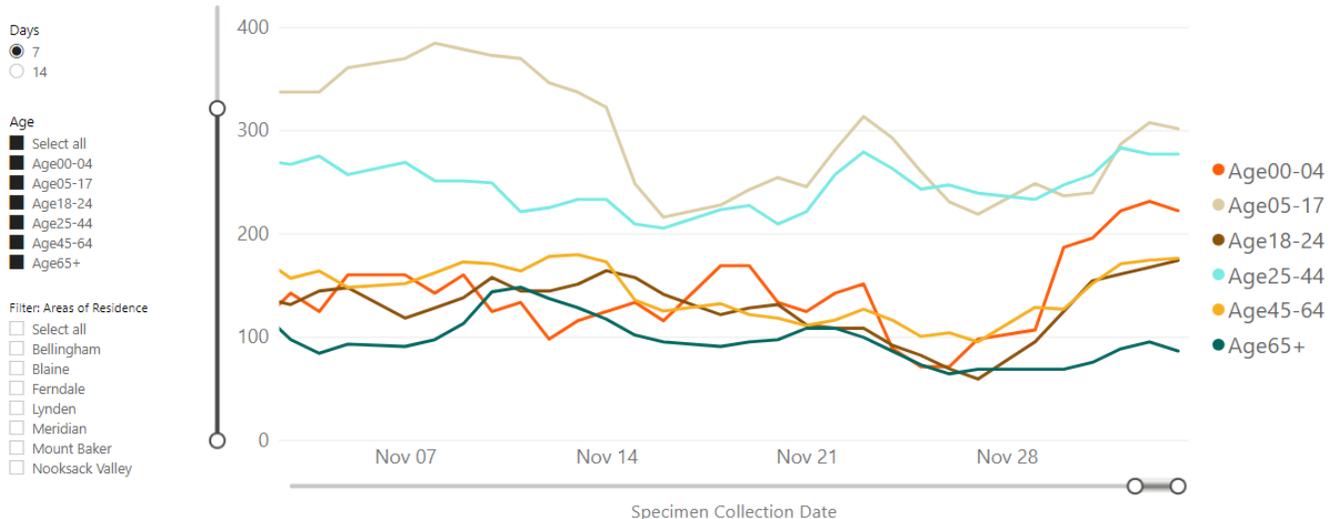
COVID-19 Cases in Areas

Among the sub-county areas in Whatcom County, the 7-day case rates range from 113 per 100,000 in the Bellingham area to 288 per 100,000 in the Lynden area (Figure 3). The relative case rates in the Ferndale, Meridian, and Mount Baker areas saw significant increases during the most recent reporting week. The case rate for the Lynden area remains above the other county areas, but is trending slowly downward.

Figure 3: 7-day COVID-19 case rates per 100,000 by age groups in Whatcom County

Case Rates by Age Groups

New confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people during the prior 7 days

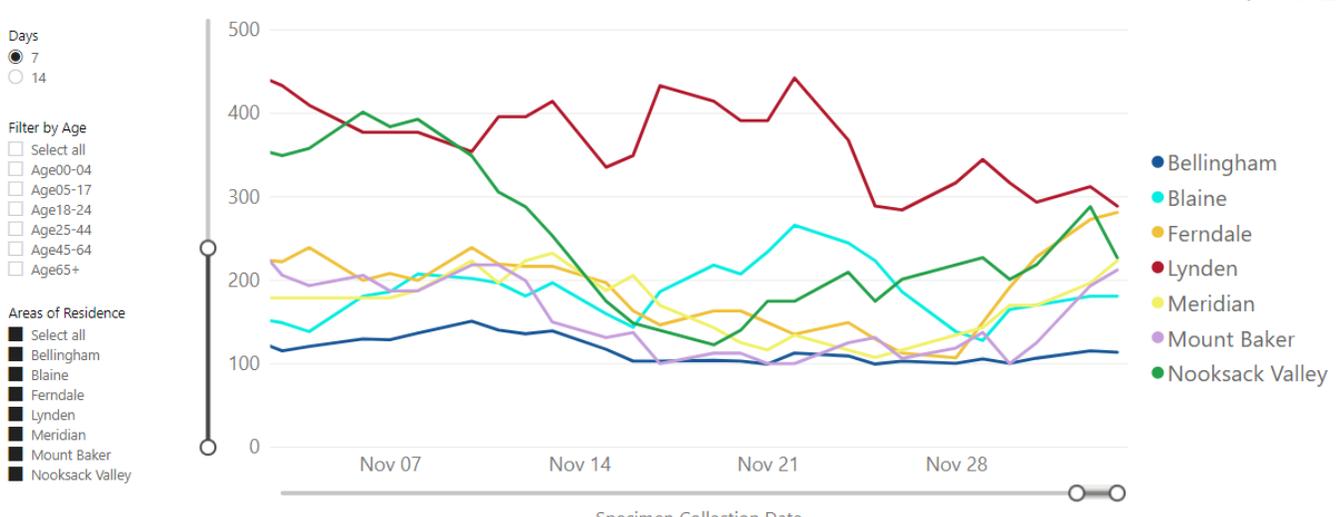


Note: Cases are assigned to an area of residence based on a case's address. Area of residence is defined as school district boundaries.

Figure 2: 7-day COVID-19 case rates per 100,000 by sub-county area in Whatcom County.

Case Rates by Area

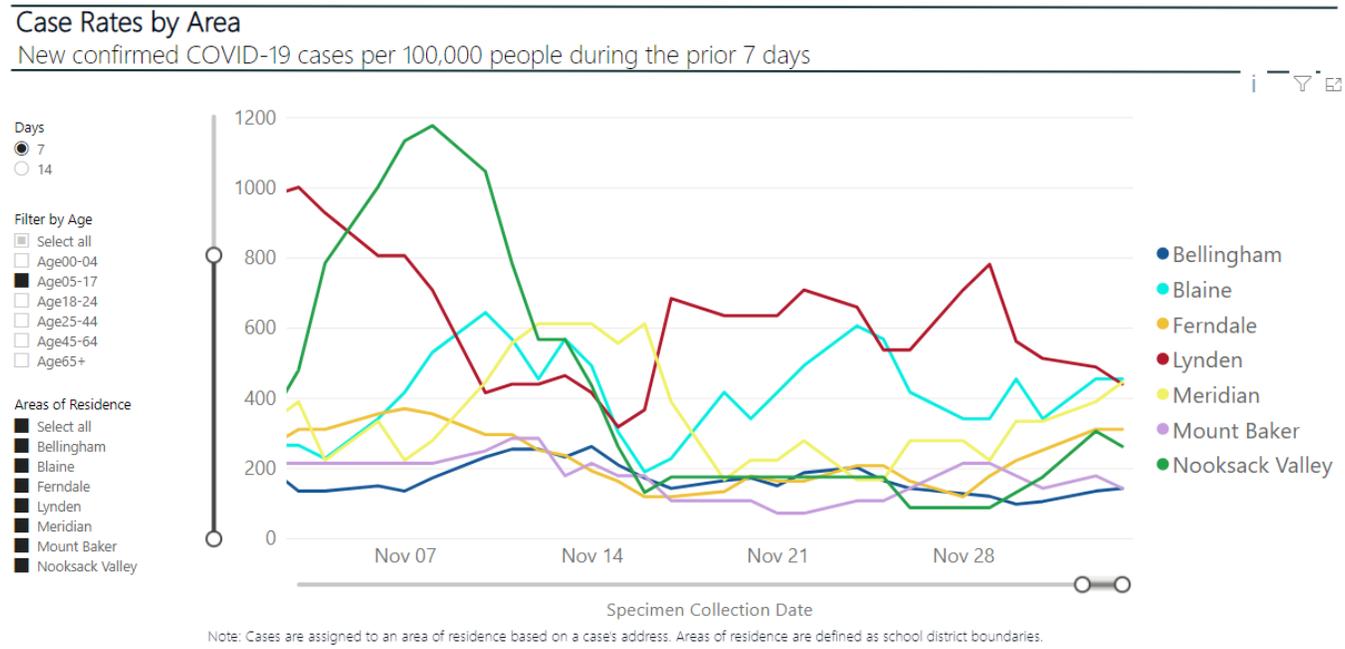
New confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people during the prior 7 days



Note: Cases are assigned to an area of residence based on a case's address. Areas of residence are defined as school district boundaries.

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 continue to occur in both the Lynden and Blaine areas, but cases among children of this age group in both Ferndale and Meridian areas are also climbing. All four of these areas are experiencing case rates above the county average for this age group.

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



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 8 provides findings by smaller age groups for the period of 11/03 – 11/30. Case rates per 100,000 among Washington residents across two age groups (12 – 34 and 35 – 64) are five times higher in unvaccinated residents. For the unvaccinated population 65 years and above the case rates per 100,000 are six times higher.

Table 1: Confirmed cases by vaccination status in Whatcom County for 11/28 – 12/04

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Cases	476	138	338

As of the most recent DOH Report on [SARS-CoV-2 Sequencing and Variants in Washington State](#), the Delta variant continues to be the dominating variant circulating throughout Whatcom County and the greater state. No other variants of concern (including the Omicron variant) have been detected from Whatcom County specimens sequenced in recent weeks. Three positive Omicron cases have been detected in specimens collected in other counties within Washington 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.

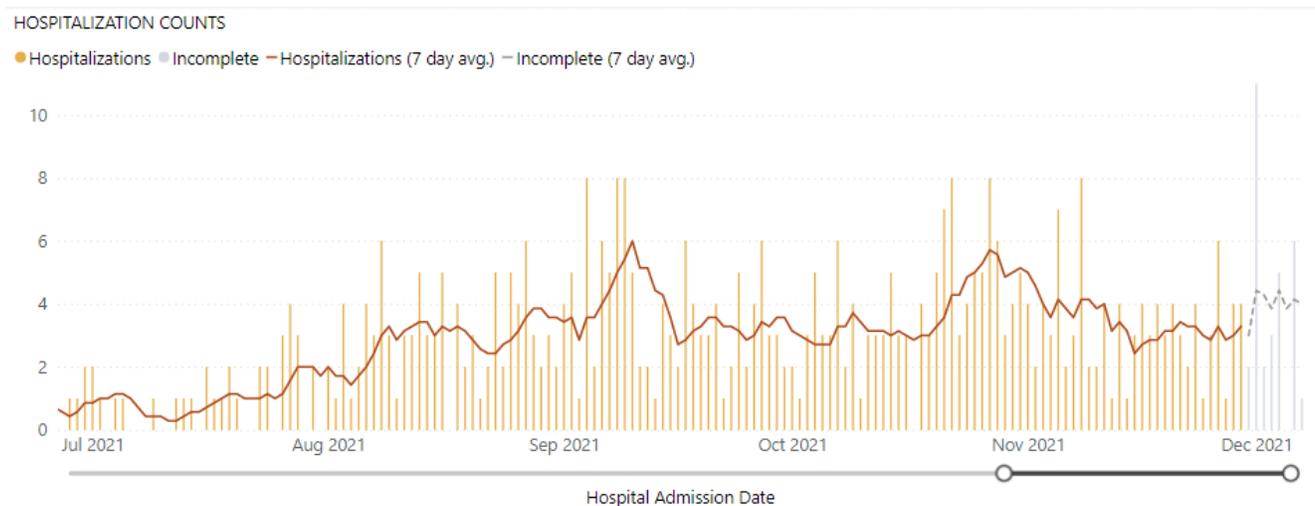
The 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom County increased to an estimate of 13.6 per 100,000 residents as of 12/04. The number of new hospitalizations among Whatcom County residents due to COVID-19 illness climbed to 36 during the seven days ending on 12/04. Consistent with the breakdown of 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 due to COVID-19 symptoms is most frequent among Whatcom County residents 45 years and above. According to the DOH Dashboard with data confirmed through 11/29, the estimated COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom County is above the state average of 6.0 hospitalizations per 100,000 population.

Table 2: COVID-19 hospitalizations in Whatcom County by vaccination status from 11/28 – 12/04

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Hospitalizations	36	9	27

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 11/29 (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.

According to the December 8 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 10/27 to 11/23 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 16 times higher in the unvaccinated population than in the fully vaccinated population. The difference in rates increases to 17 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.

COVID-19 Deaths

Whatcom County saw three deaths due to COVID-19 during the week ending on 12/04 (Table 3):

- Two unvaccinated females, 70-79 years
- One unvaccinated male, 70-79 years

Table 3. Summary of COVID-19 deaths among Whatcom County residents by vaccination status for 11/28 – 12/04.

COVID-19 Deaths	Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
Weeks 11/28 – 12/04	3	0	3

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 27, and the overall count for COVID-19 deaths is 180.

According to the December 8 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 10/13 to 11/09 suggests that for individuals 65 and older, unvaccinated individuals are eleven 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+.

As of Dec. 4, the number of pediatric vaccinations received in Whatcom County is 4,028, accounting for 23% of the eligible population in the 5 – 11 year-old age group.

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

	Initiating (%)	Fully Vaccinated (%)
Total Population	68.4	63.0
Population 5+	73.7	66.3
Population 12+	78.3	71.9

As of 12/04, the total number of booster doses administered to Whatcom residents is 38,720.



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

