

Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated 12/16/21 for the period of 12/05/21 – 12/11/21

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 significantly during the week ending 12/11 after a steep increase during the week prior.
- The case rates among all age groups declined during the most recent reporting week, and the percentage of cases accountable from 5 – 17 year olds fell to 19% of all confirmed cases.
- The first case of the new Omicron variant was reported in Whatcom County on 12/10.
- The 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom residents is showing a declining trend during the past reporting week ending 12/11.
- COVID-19 hospitalizations among residents 65+ years decreased during the most recent reporting week. Less than a third of reported hospitalizations were among residents from this age group.
- The number of 5 – 11 year olds in Whatcom County that initiated vaccination reached 4,410 (25%).

For the period of 12/05-12/11

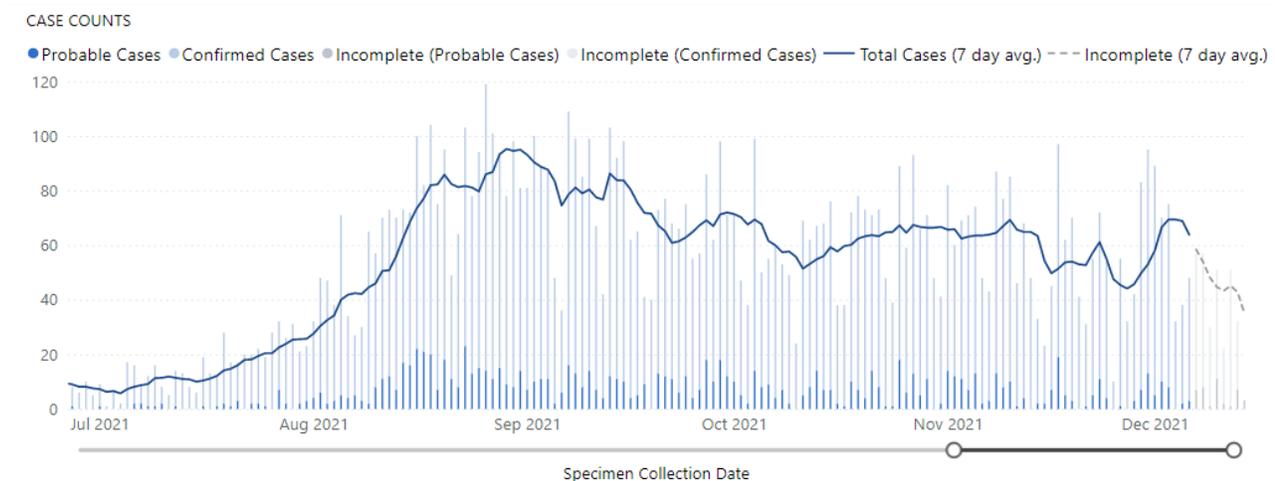
7-Day Case Rate / 100,000	7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000
133	8.3

Overview of COVID-19 Cases

Declining case counts and case rates were reported across the county during the most recent reporting week. While it is still difficult to determine the source of the post-Thanksgiving holiday rise in

cases that was seen across the region, COVID-19 cases have fallen back to levels experienced prior to the holiday. Whatcom County saw a total of 302 confirmed and probable cases from specimens collected during the reporting week 12/05 – 12/11. The 7-day case rate in Whatcom County for this reporting week is 133 cases per 100,000 residents. The percentage of cases accounted for by school-age children is 19% 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).

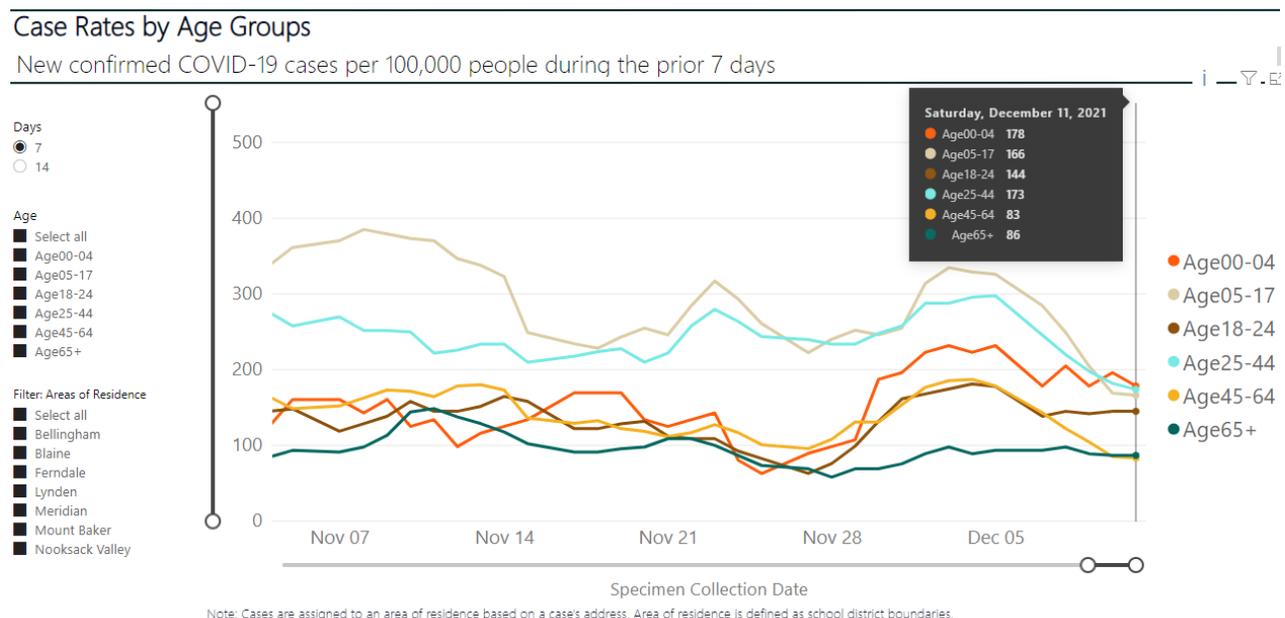
Figure 1: Daily COVID-19 case counts and 7-day average for Whatcom County (Source: DOH)



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

The 7-day case rates for many age groups in the county declined during the most recent reporting week. The case rates range from 83 per 100,000 for 45 – 64 year olds up to 178 per 100,000 for 0 – 4 year olds. This is the first time since August that all of the age groups reported case rates below 200

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



per 100,000 population. The case rate for older adults 65+ years remained level, but continues to be one of the lowest rates in the county.

COVID-19 Cases in Areas

Among the sub-county areas in Whatcom County, the 7-day case rates range from 76 per 100,000 in the Bellingham area to 205 per 100,000 in the Meridian area (Figure 3). The relative case rates in all area declined during the most recent reporting week.

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

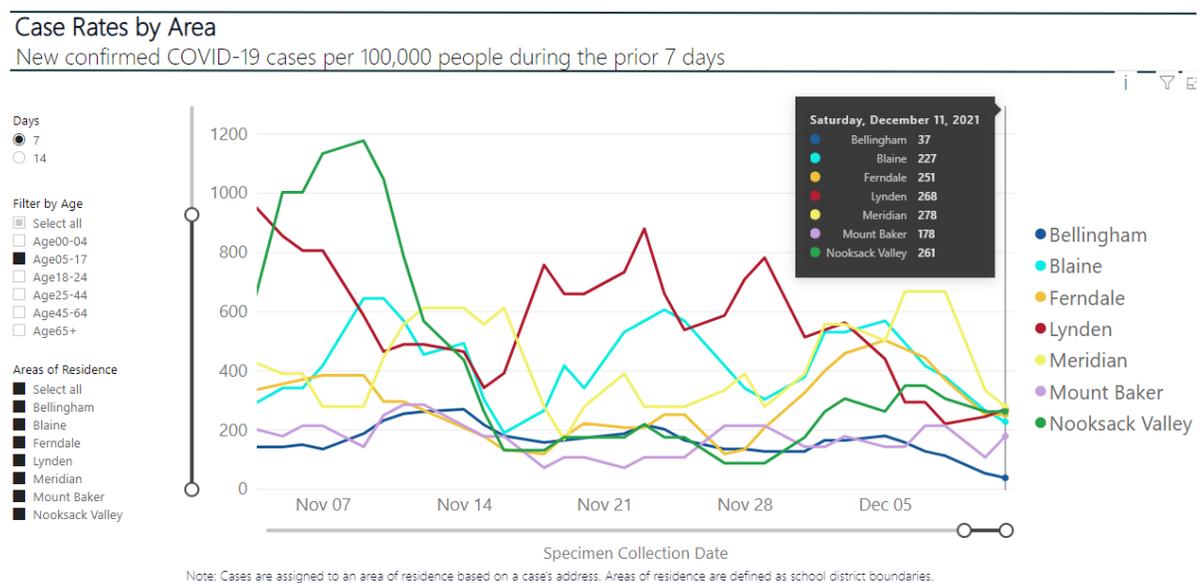
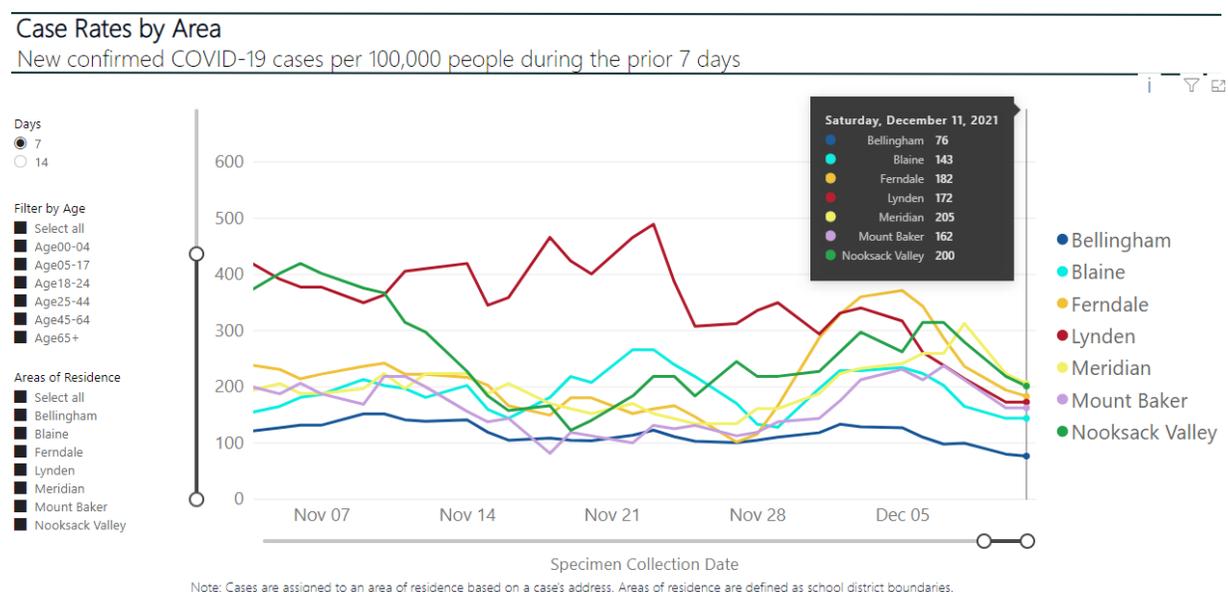


Figure 4 shows the 7-day case rates per 100,000 for 5 – 17-year-olds across the different regions of Whatcom County. Higher relative case rates occurring in in this age group over the past several

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



weeks have declined below 300 per 100,000 during the recent reporting week. The last time that the overall case rate for 5 – 17 year olds in Whatcom County was at the current level (165 per 100,000) was in mid-August.

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 15 provides findings by smaller age groups for the period of 11/10 – 12/07. Case rates per 100,000 among Washington residents 12 – 64 years are five times higher in unvaccinated residents. The case rate per 100,000 among Washington residents over 65 years is six times higher in unvaccinated residents.

Table 1: Confirmed cases by vaccination status in Whatcom County for 12/05– 12/11

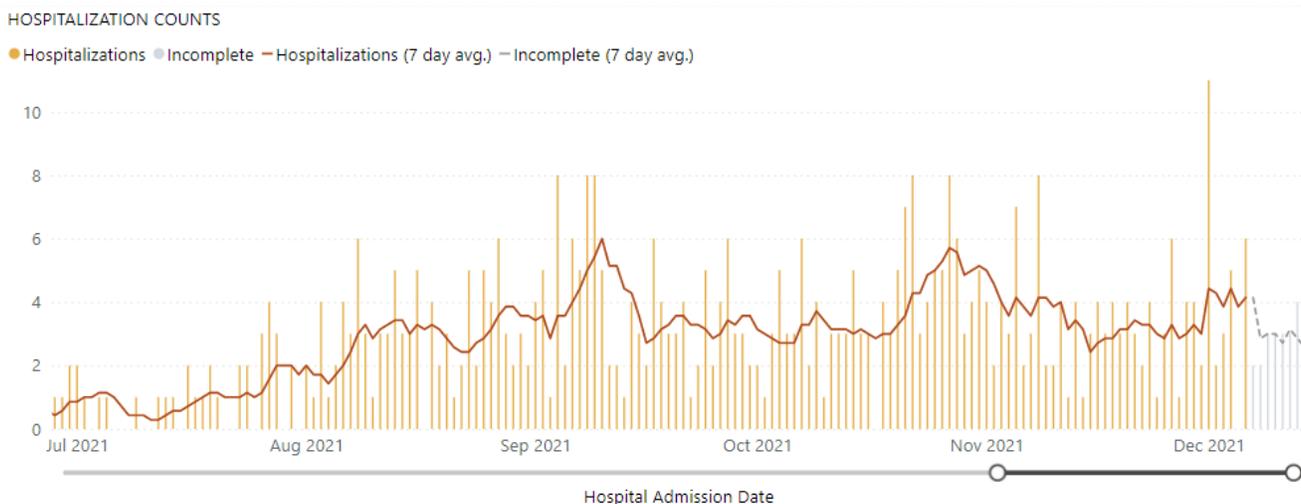
	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Cases	302	78	224

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. According to this report, 10 of the most recent sequenced specimens in Washington State detected the Omicron variant, and one of these was reported in Whatcom County.

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

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.

(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 8.3 per 100,000 residents as of 12/11. There were 20 new hospitalizations among Whatcom County residents due to COVID-19 illness during the seven days ending on 12/11. 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 12/11. 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	3	17

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).

According to the December 15 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 11/03 to 11/30 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 23 times higher in the unvaccinated population than in the fully vaccinated population. The difference in rates is 17 times higher for unvaccinated 35 – 64 year olds. For the oldest cohort 65 years and above, the rate of COVID-19 hospitalization is eleven times higher in the unvaccinated population than in the vaccinated population.

COVID-19 Deaths

Whatcom County saw four deaths due to COVID-19 during the week ending on 12/11 since the last report (Table 3):

- Two unvaccinated males, 40-49 years
- Two vaccinated males, 80-89 years

Table 3. Summary of COVID-19 deaths among Whatcom County residents by vaccination status

COVID-19 Deaths	Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
Week 12/05 – 12/11	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 28, and the overall count for COVID-19 deaths is 184.

According to the December 15 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 10/20 to 11/16 suggests that for individuals 65 and older, unvaccinated individuals are 13 times more likely to die of COVID-19 than vaccinated individuals.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

After one year of delivering COVID-19 vaccinations, 319,286 vaccinations have been given in Whatcom County. The percent coverage for COVID-19 vaccinations among the population is displayed in Table 4 as of 12/13. Of the eligible population (5+ years), there are 55,000 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+. Using February 1st as an estimate for the first time Whatcom County residents became fully-vaccinated, there have been 114 deaths reported due to COVID-19. 86 of these deaths were among unvaccinated residents.

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

	Initiating (%)	Fully Vaccinated (%)
Total Population	68.7	63.4
Population 5+	73.9	66.9
Population 12+	78.8	72.6

As of Dec. 13, the number of pediatric vaccinations received in Whatcom County is 4,410, accounting for 25% of the eligible population in the 5 – 11 year-old age group.

As of 12/11, the total number of booster doses administered to Whatcom residents is 46,709. Of those, 22,558 have been for residents 65+.



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