

Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated 5/13/22 for the period of 4/1/22 – 4/30/22

Executive Summary

This report is currently published monthly 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](#), and 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.

Whatcom County experienced an increase in confirmed and probable COVID-19 case counts during April. The 7-day average daily case count climbed to 67 cases per day.

The 7-day rate for COVID-19 hospitalizations by specimen date among Whatcom County residents increased and reached 5.7 per 100K by the end of the month. An increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations occurred among individuals 65 and older during the month of April.

Beginning March 30, the WA DOH announced that those 50 years and older as well as certain immunocompromised individuals may begin to receive a second COVID-19 booster dose four months after receiving their first booster dose.

There are now 90,080 Whatcom County residents (12+) who have received an additional dose accounting for 61.5% of the eligible population.

Information for COVID-19 vaccinations by race and ethnicity is now available on the DOH dashboard.

April 2022 COVID-19 Numbers

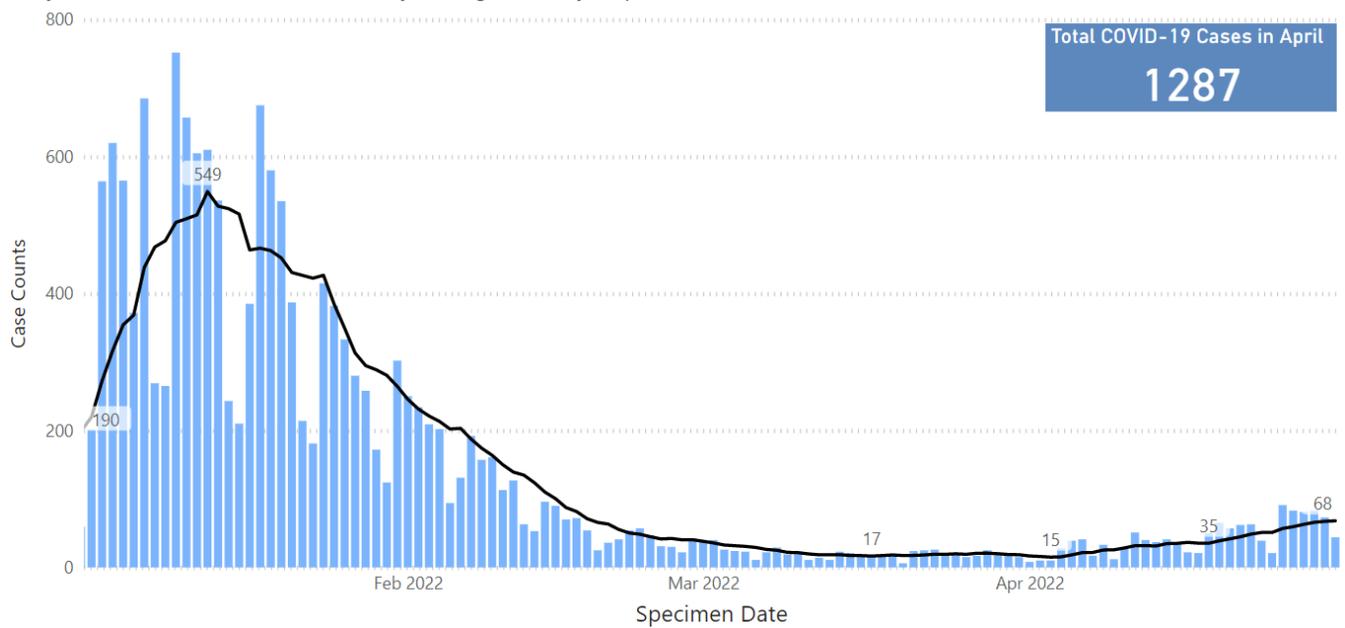
Case Count	Average 7-Day Case Rate / 100,000	Hospitalization Count	Average 7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000
1,287	131.8	35	3.6

Overview of COVID-19 Cases

In Whatcom County, the total number of confirmed and probable cases increased over the month of April. New confirmed and probable cases for March totaled 1,287 with an average daily case count of 43 cases. COVID-19 testing patterns have changed during the recent months and many individuals are choosing over-the-counter (OTC) tests across the county. The results from these OTC tests remain largely unreported, and therefore estimates of confirmed case counts and rates may not portray the complete picture of COVID-19 activity in the county. Starting on March 12th, the mask mandate was lifted in Washington State. WA DOH accompanied this policy change with new guidance for schools, child care, day camps, and other youth activities.

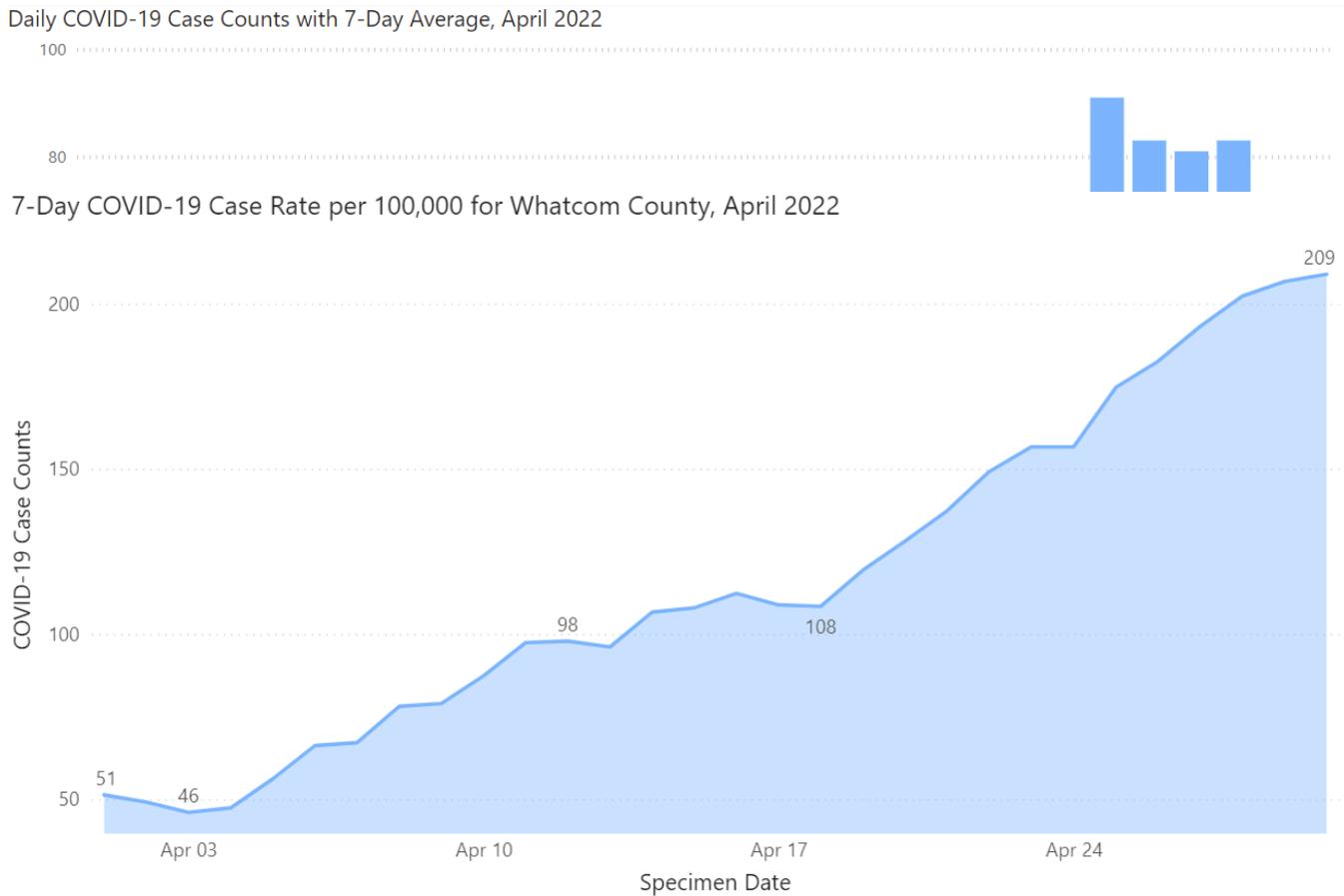
Figure 1 shows the confirmed and probable case counts for Whatcom County from January through April, 2022. The black line indicates the 7-day average for daily cases.

Daily COVID-19 Case Counts with 7-Day Average, January - April 2022



During the month of April, COVID-19 cases declined at a slower rate than previous months. The 7-day average daily case count was recorded at 16.7 at the beginning of the month, but then climbed to 67.9 by the month's end (Figure 2)..

Figure 2. Daily COVID-19 Case Counts and 7-Day average for Whatcom County during April, 2022.



The COVID-19 case rate per 100,000 in Whatcom County was measured at 46 on April 3 (Figure 3). This was the lowest rate recorded since the Omicron peak. The case rate then climbed throughout the remainder of April and reached a high of 209 per 100,000 by the end. The average 7-day rate for the overall month of April was 131.8 per 100,000 - a 100% increase over the same rate during March. Whatcom County experienced a similar case rate during the month of February, when rates were declining.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides a county level measure of COVID-19 data standardized across the country. The COVID-19 community levels presented on this page are determined by the number of new cases per 100,000 in the previous seven days, and by two COVID-19 hospitalization indicators that measure new admissions and the percent of inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients. At the end of April, Whatcom County was rated at a COVI-19 Community Level of Medium. This CDC resource can be accessed [here](#).

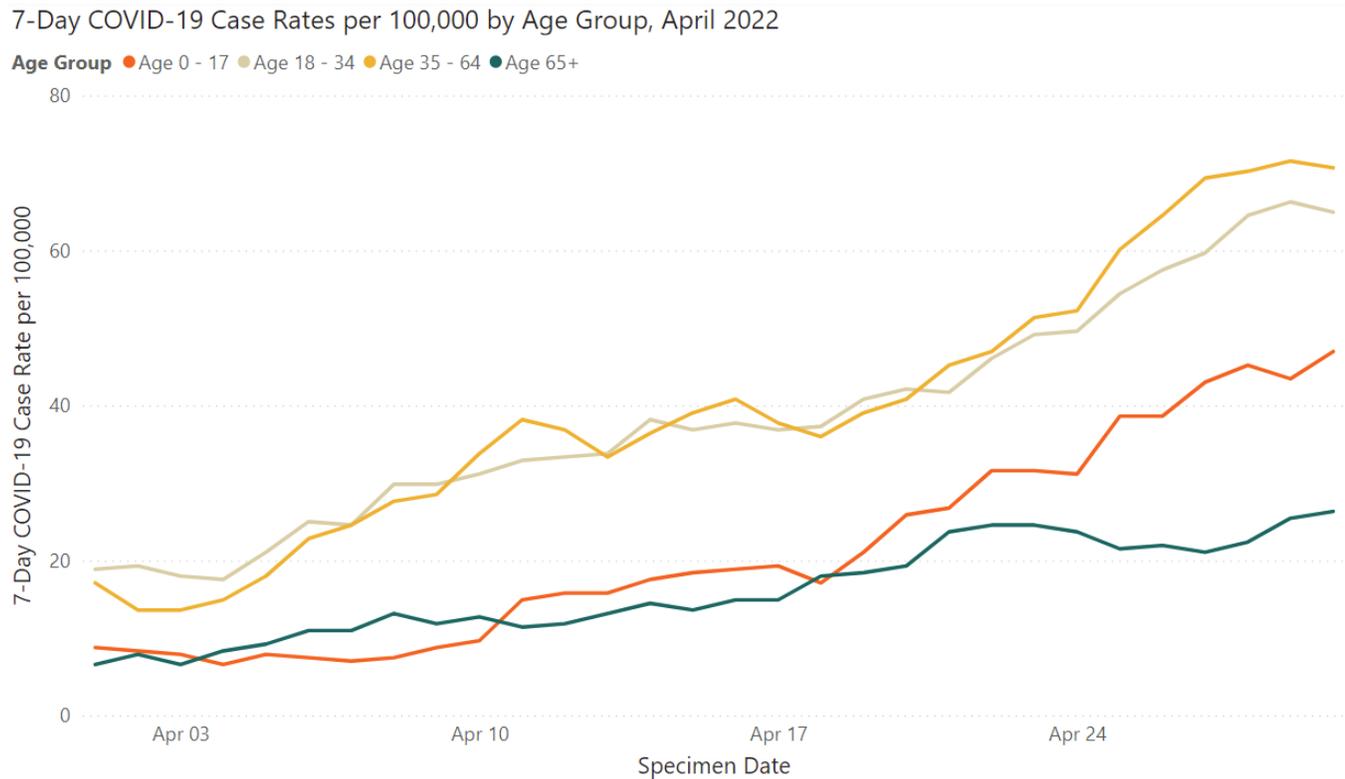
During the month of April, the dominant variant lineage detected in sequenced COVID-19 specimens in Washington State continues to be the BA.2 variant. This new variant has been

detected among Whatcom County residents. More information can be found in the WA DOH [Sequencing and Variants Report](#). Specimens from only about 10% of collected specimens are sent for genomic sequencing. A specimen may be selected for sequencing if it comes from a unique case, such as a younger otherwise healthy person who is hospitalized for COVID-19. The state DOH is also sequencing a random sample of specimens across the state to estimate the overall prevalence of variants.

COVID-19 Cases in Age Groups

The relative case rates per 100,000 for all of the age groups experienced an increase during the month of April consistent with the county average. Children 0 - 17 years experienced a 5-fold increase in case rate from 8.8 up to 47 per 100,000 at the month's end (Figure 4).

Figure 4. 7-day COVID-19 case rates per 100,000 by age groups in Whatcom County.



The new WCHD [dashboard](#) displays the information related to cases, hospitalizations, and deaths by vaccination status. Case rates for COVID-19 cases that are unvaccinated, fully vaccinated, and fully vaccinated + additional dose per 100,000 residents are displayed for ages 5 and older. This cut off is made due to the fact that children under 5 years old are not eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccination at this time. The relative case rates for all three vaccination status experienced an increase during April.

An analysis of cases by vaccination status at the state level is available in the [DOH Cases, Hospitalization and Deaths by Vaccination Status report](#).

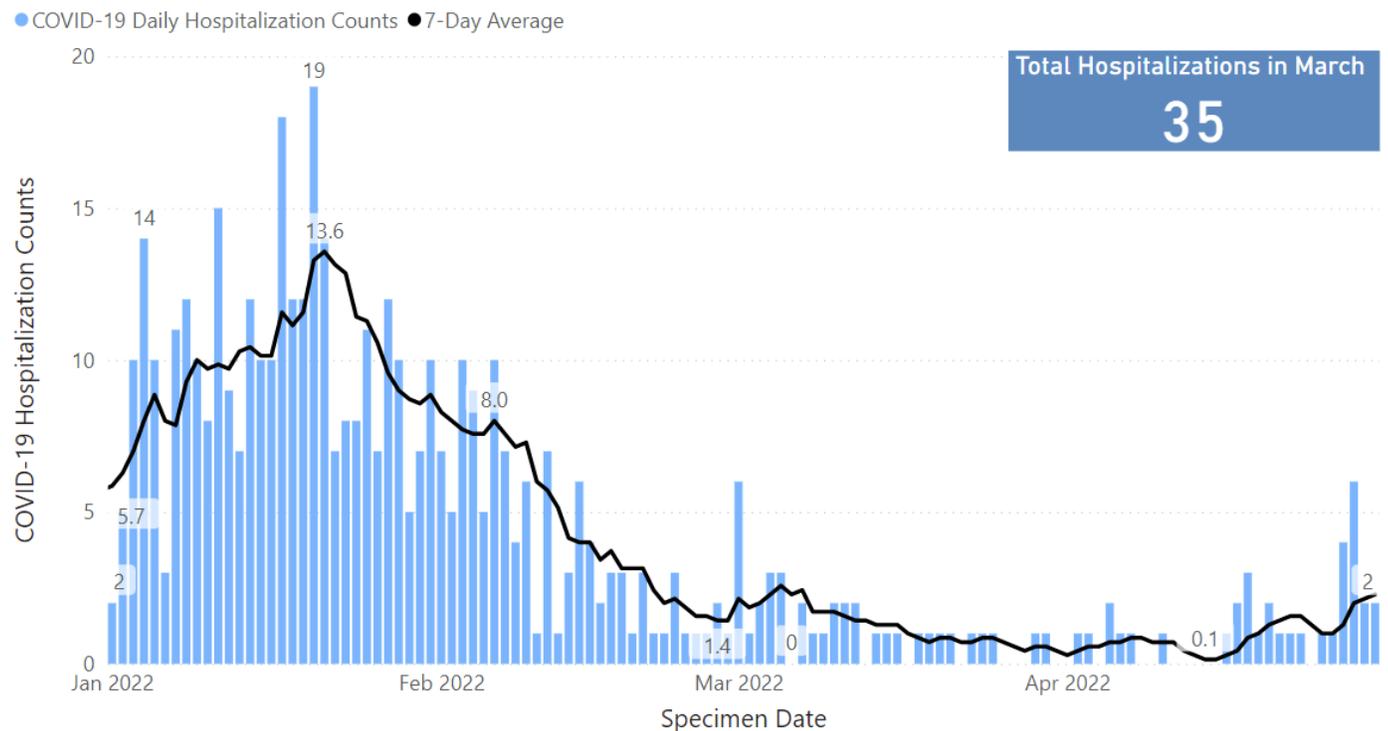
COVID-19 Hospitalizations

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.

COVID-19 hospitalizations recorded by specimen date among Whatcom County residents since January 1 are shown in Figure 5. COVID-19 hospitalizations peaked during the Omicron-dominant phase in January and have since steadily declined until April. During April, COVID-19 hospitalizations began to increase after reaching the lowest mark since the Omicron Peak. The total number of COVID-19 hospitalizations was 35 during the month of April.

The 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rate per 100,000 Whatcom County residents was measured

Figure 5: COVID-19 hospitalization counts and 7-Day Average for Whatcom County residents
Daily COVID-19 Hospitalization Counts and 7-Day Average



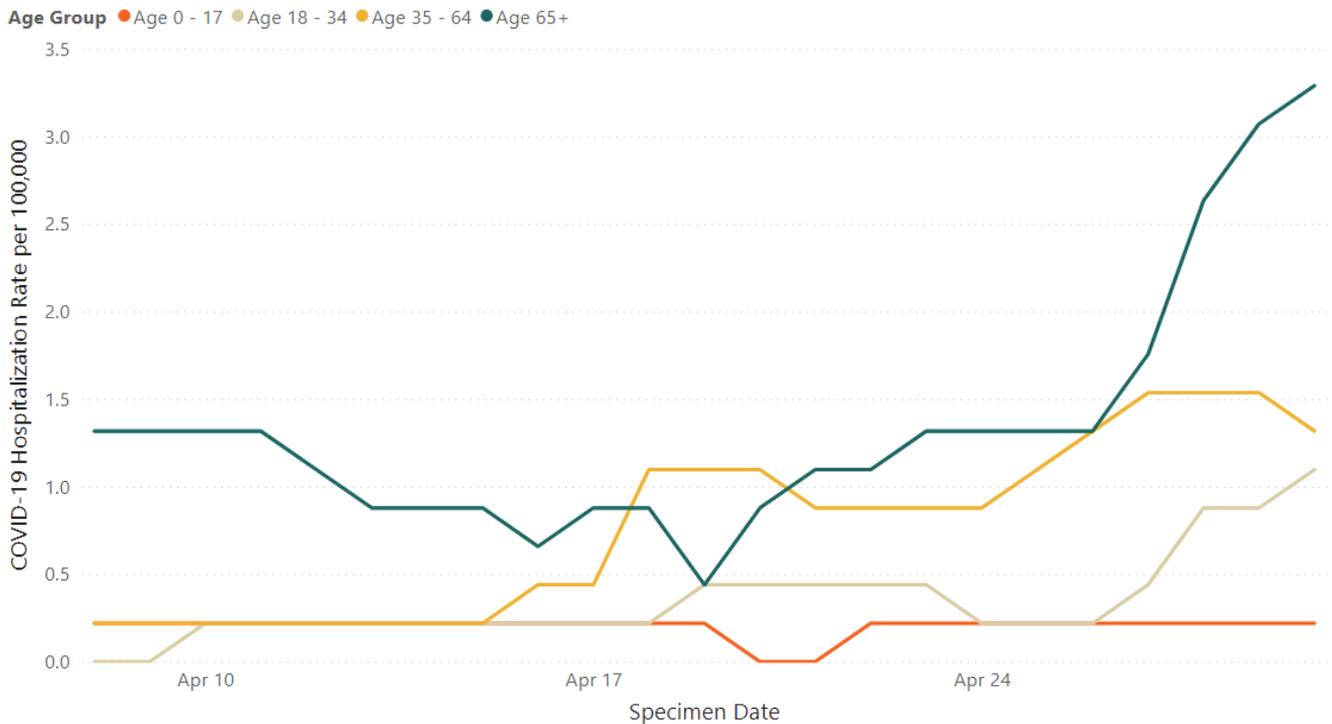
Note: PeaceHealth reports the number of COVID-19 positive patients, a measure of the number of people who are hospitalized for any reason/diagnosis and who have also tested positive for COVID-19. Their care requires COVID-19 protocols to prevent infection of others in the hospital, regardless of the 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.

at <1.0 at the beginning of April but started to increase by the end of the month (Figure 5). This rate reached 5.7 per 100,000 by the end of April. A 7-day hospitalization rate of 1.0 in Whatcom County translates to roughly 2 hospitalizations per week. The hospitalization rates are averaged over 14 days and stratified by age group in Figure 6. The 14 day period is used because of the low

counts in each age group. The relative rate for individuals 65 years and older experienced an increase from 1.3 up to 3.3 hospitalizations per 100,000 population. The relative rates among the other age groups increased slightly, but remained less than 10 for the group over the entire month.

Figure 6. COVID-19 Hospitalization Rates per 100,000 for Whatcom County Residents by Age Group.

COVID-19 Hospitalization Rate per 100,000 by Age Group, April 2022



The COVID-19 hospitalization rates by vaccination status for Whatcom County residents can be seen on the WCHD [dashboard](#). The rates for unvaccinated, fully vaccinated, and fully vaccinated + additional dose are shown on the dashboard for ages 5-49 years and for ages 50 and older. Age is an important factor to consider when looking at the relationship between COVID-19 vaccination status and hospitalization. However, the number of COVID-19 hospitalizations among Whatcom County residents does not support dividing rates into smaller age groups than those displayed. During the month of April hospitalization rates among unvaccinated and fully vaccinated individuals 50 years and older began to increase by the month's end. At the same time, individuals 50 and older with an additional COVID-19 vaccination dose continue to experience a significantly lower rate of hospitalization than either unvaccinated or fully vaccinated individuals.

For an analysis of hospitalizations by vaccination status across the Washington State population, the [DOH Report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths is available.

COVID-19 Deaths

The number of deaths due to COVID-19 among Whatcom County residents remained relatively low throughout the month of April. In January, there were 49 Covid-19 deaths recorded by specimen collection date. In February this number fell to 15, and then in March to 8. Whatcom county recorded six COVID-19 deaths during the month of April at the time this report was published. Among the six deaths in April, one female was 50-59 years, one male was 70-79 years, and the remaining two females and two males were 80 years and above.

Table 1 COVID-19 Deaths among Whatcom County Residents

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr*	May*
49	15	8	6	0

*These months are not yet complete and may increase.

The total number of deaths due to COVID-19 among Whatcom County residents reached 298 as of April. These numbers are preliminary; WCHD may not yet have been notified of other deaths for this period.

Deaths among Whatcom County residents by vaccination status is also available on the WCHD [dashboard](#). The rates displayed include deaths only among individuals 50 years and older due to the relatively small number of deaths in other age groups and the instability in rates when assessing by vaccination status.

An analysis of deaths for the Washington State population by vaccination status is available in the state's [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

Beginning March 30, the WA DOH announced that those 50 years and older as well as certain immunocompromised individuals may begin to receive a second COVID-19 booster dose four months after receiving their first booster dose.

The percent coverage for COVID-19 vaccinations among the Whatcom County population is displayed in Table 4 as of the end of April. Of the eligible population (5+ years), there are 46k Whatcom County residents who have not initiated vaccination. The number of 5 - 11 year olds who received an initial COVID-19 vaccination dose in April was 116 and the total at the end of the month was 7,319 (41%). For additional COVID-19 vaccination doses, there are now 90,080 Whatcom County residents (12+) who have received this dose.

Table 2: Percent of population who are initiating vaccination and fully vaccinated in Whatcom County.

	Initiating (%)	Fully Vaccinated (%)	Eligible to Receive Booster (12+) (%)
Total Population	75.3	68.9	61.5
Population 5+	78.7	72.0	--

The state’s DOH Dashboard provides information on the proportion of people in Washington that has received COVID-19 vaccinations including booster doses by age group and county.



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