

This report provides information that Cowlitz County residents can use to understand COVID-19 activity in our community. Cowlitz County Health & Human Services (CCCHHS) will update these data weekly on Mondays, or the following business day if Monday is a holiday. Please contact Askcowlitzhealth@co.cowlitz.wa.us with any questions or comments.

COVID-19 activity in Cowlitz County

Analysis of all indicators in this report in context suggest the following trends in COVID-19 activity in Cowlitz County. Supporting data are provided for each trend

Steady and low while the Stay Home – Stay Healthy proclamation was in place

Testing rates increased, percent positivity decreased, and case incidence remained steady and low.

Large increase after Cowlitz County entered Phase 2, with activity peaking in mid-July

Testing, percent positivity, and case rates all increased. Case rates increased more than testing rates.

Large decrease from mid-July through early-mid August

Other than a bump in late July/early August, testing, cases, and percent positivity all decreased steadily.

Since mid-August, activity may be creeping back up

Testing and case rates have remained fairly steady while percent positivity appears to be increasing slowly.

School reopening

Since the two-week period of 7/17-7/30, through the two-week period 8/26-9/8,

Cowlitz County has been at a MODERATE level of COVID-19 activity for a total of 5 ½ weeks.

Because of the large spike in cases after the 4th of July, CCHHS is waiting until this report is released on Monday, 9/21, to assess the impact of the Labor Day holiday before making a recommendation about in-person learning.

Testing

Testing rates increased in Washington State in early March; Cowlitz County's testing rates caught up with Washington's by mid-late April. Both Washington State and Cowlitz County saw an increase in testing after DOH released a provider advisory on May 27 encouraging providers to test all patients with symptoms. Cowlitz's testing rate stalled out after that, but bumped up again to get on par with the state rate after a Cowlitz County provider advisory was sent out on July 3. Since the end of July, testing rates have remained high statewide, while they've fallen off in Cowlitz County.

Percent positivity began very high in both Washington State and Cowlitz County, when testing supplies were limited to only the highest-risk patients. It decreased steadily through mid-May as testing availability increased, and began to increase again after mid-May, when Cowlitz and many other counties in Washington State began progressing through Safe Start phases. Since early July, other than a bump in late July/early August, percent positivity decreased steadily in Cowlitz County through early-mid August. Since then, it has slowly been creeping back up.

Cases

The number of cases identified in Cowlitz County and Washington State was generally low while the Stay Home – Stay Healthy proclamation was in place, at around 1 new case per day on average in Cowlitz County. Cowlitz County case counts increased after we entered Phase 2 on May 23, including a dramatic spike in early-mid July. After the July spike, other than a bump in early August, our rate steadily decreased through early-mid-August. Since then, our case count has held steady at an average of 2-3 new cases per day. Washington State also saw an increase in cases followed by a decrease during the same time period, though the spike was not as dramatic.

Hospitalizations & deaths

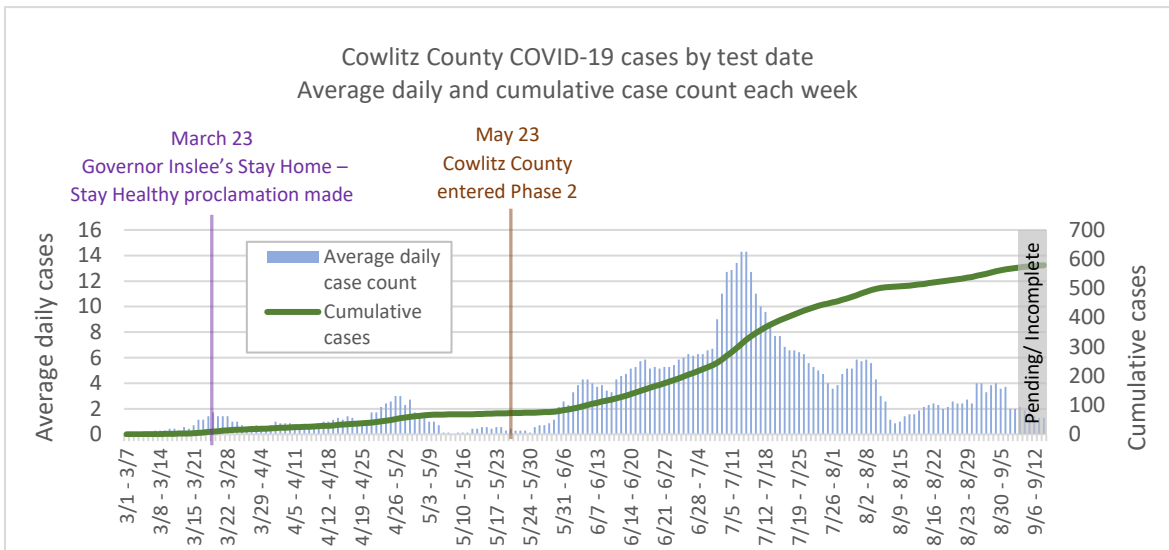
The data as they are currently presented in this graph involve numbers that are too small to draw meaningful conclusions. Future reports will analyze the data in a more meaningful way and present our findings.

Note: Our interpretations of time trends are based on the current graph and related statistical analysis (not shown in report). Trend interpretation and other findings may change as we have more data in the future.

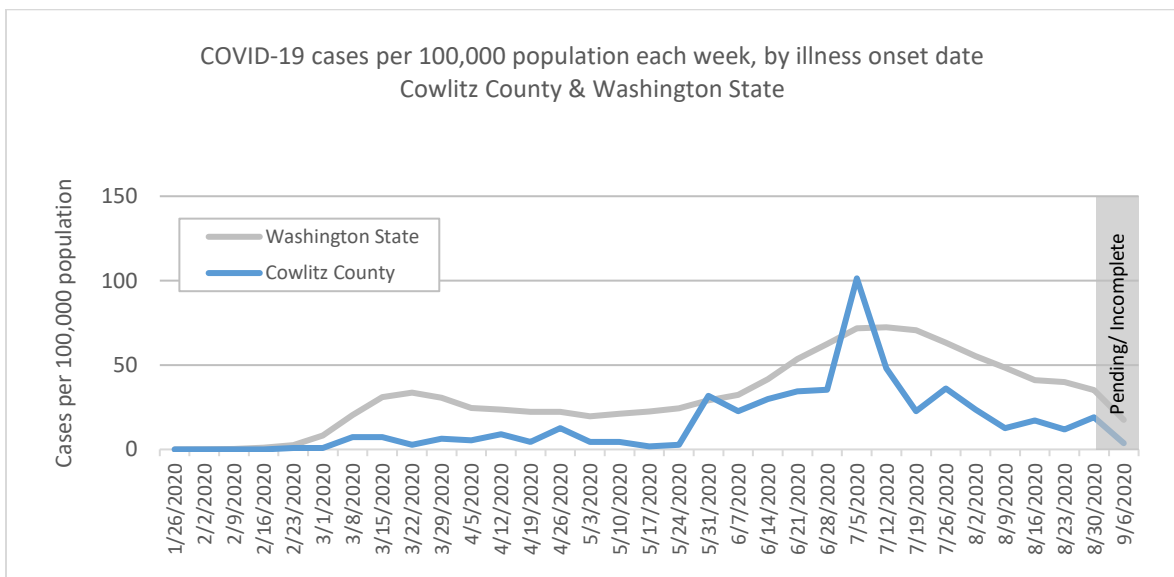
Epidemiologic curve and case rates

We use the epidemiologic curve to determine how COVID-19 is spreading in our community. The cumulative number of cases is helpful to assess the overall burden of disease in our community. To date, 0.53% of Cowlitz County residents have tested positive for COVID-19.

Most members of our community have not had a COVID test, and those who have had only negative test results may have been infected long before or after they were tested. Consequently, we know that more people have had COVID-19 than those who have tested positive. The CDC [estimates](#) that the true number of COVID-19 cases in a community is at least ten (10) times the number of people who have tested positive. Based on this, we estimate that 5.3% of Cowlitz County residents have been infected with COVID-19. Note that this estimate is based on the best available data and studies to date and may change as more information is available in the future.



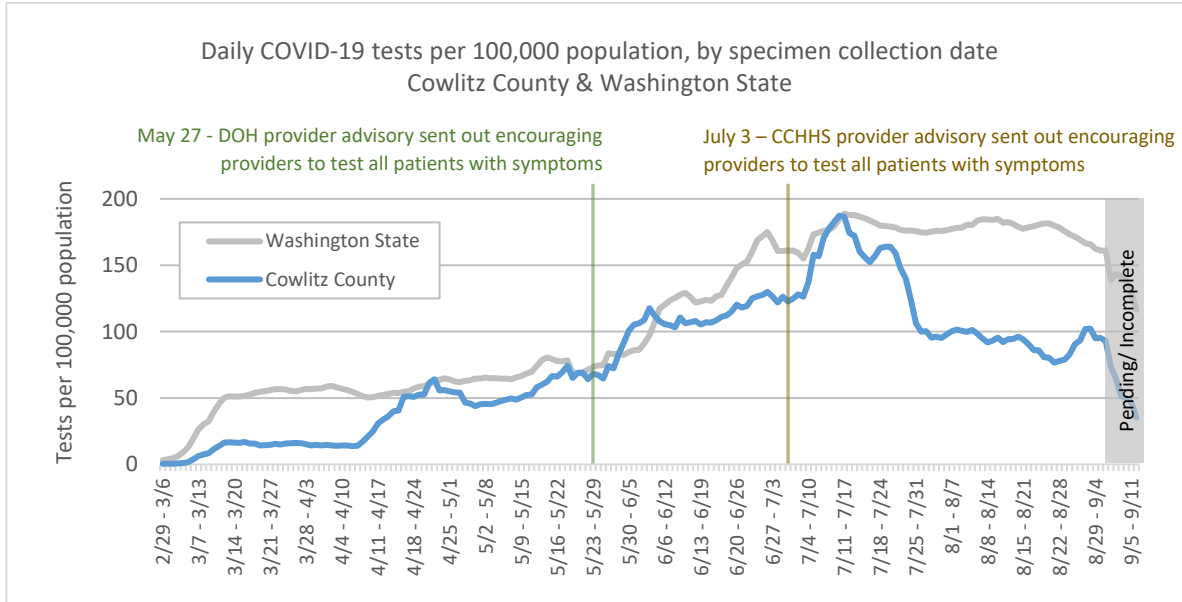
In addition to looking at case counts over time, it is helpful to compare Cowlitz County trends to Washington State as a whole. To account for the difference in population size, we look at how many cases are in each area per 100,000 population.



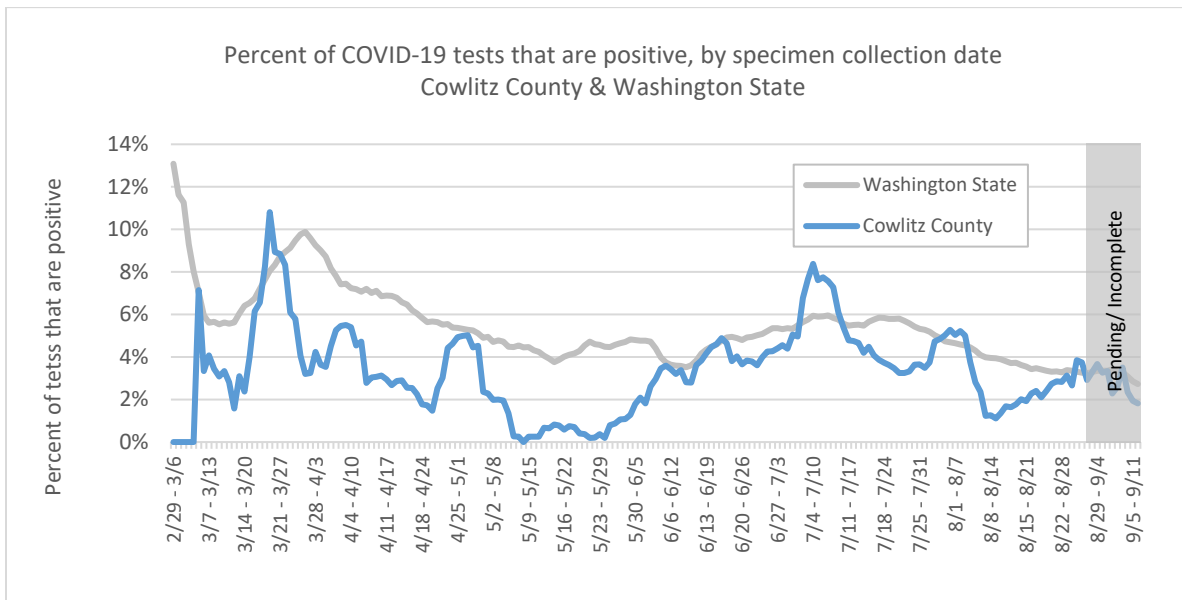
Testing and percent positivity rates

To more fully understand COVID activity in our community, we can also look at the number of tests being done in our community as well as the percent of tests that are positive.

This graph displays the 7-day average of the number of tests administered to Cowlitz County residents each day. To date, a total of 16,181 tests have been administered to Cowlitz County residents. Future reports will provide the number of individuals that have been tested, and compare this figure to statewide data.

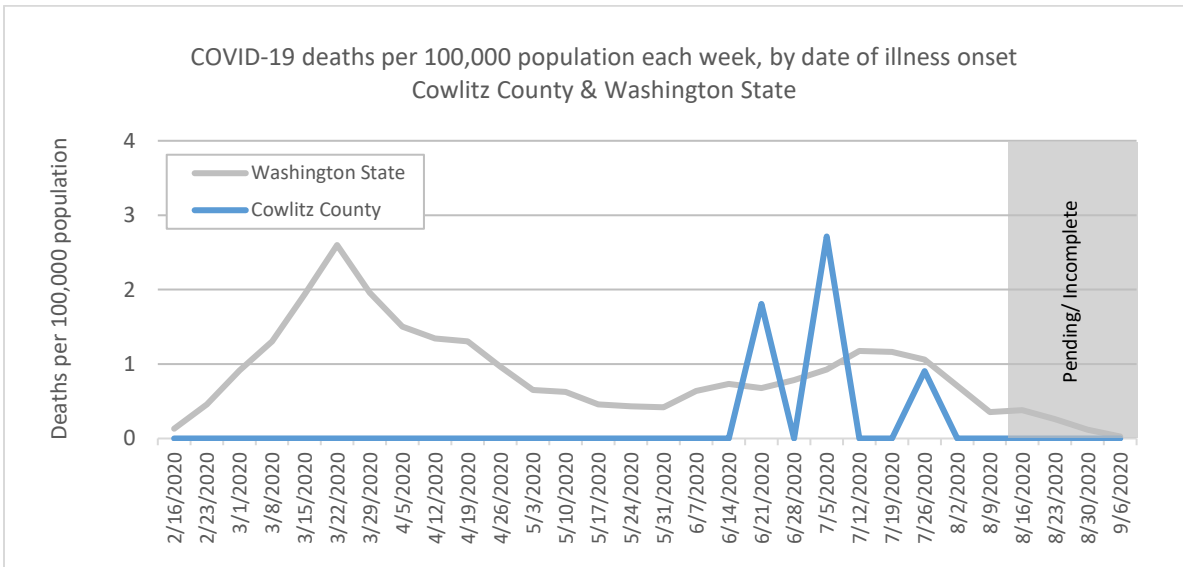
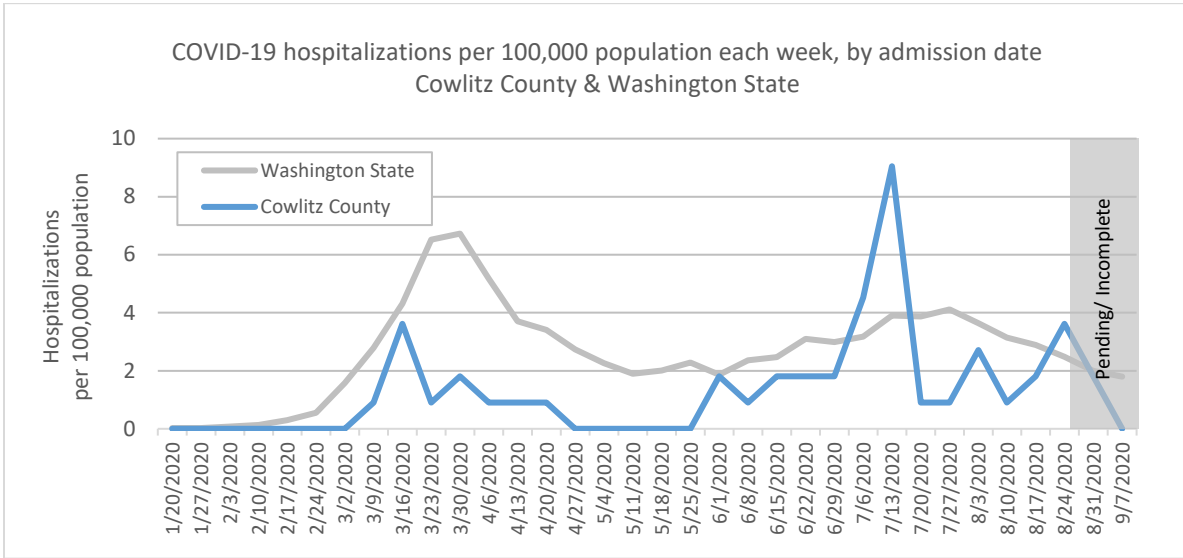


This graph displays the percent of tests that are positive over time. This figure can help us assess disease burden in our community in the context of testing rates.



Hospitalizations & deaths

Hospitalizations and deaths are two ways we can look at the severity of cases in our community. Note that these graphs are based on small numbers – future reports will include more smoothed rates to better assess trends.



School reopening

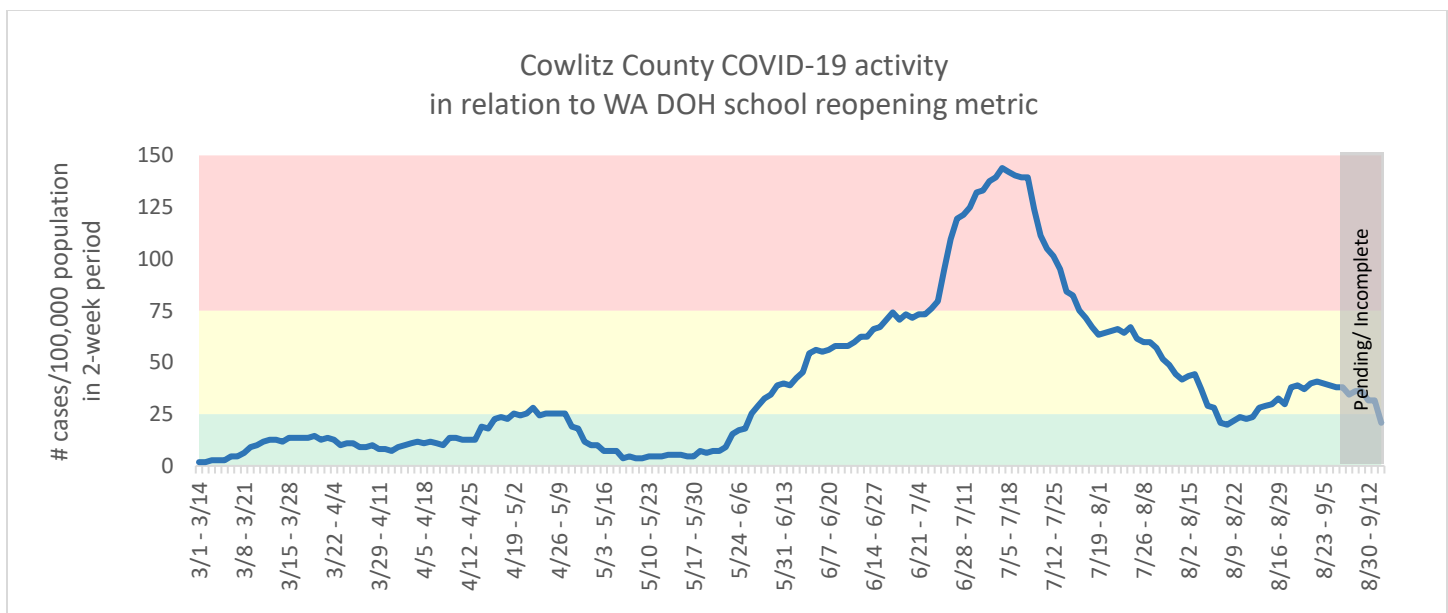
These data illustrate how COVID-19 activity in our community compares to the metrics identified by the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Health for use in deciding when and how to reopen schools.

Cowlitz County is currently at a **MODERATE** level of COVID-19 activity, with 38 cases per 100,000 population in the past 14 days (8/26-9/8). The calculation is: $(42 \text{ total cases between } 8/26 \text{ and } 9/8) / (110,500 \text{ population}) * (100,000 \text{ multiplier}) = 38$.

School reopening plans will vary by district. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) have developed [guidance](#) for local health officials and school superintendents around health and safety recommendations. In addition, DOH has produced a [Decision Tree](#) to aid communities in reopening schools. The last page of that document includes an organized diagram outlining the factors and metrics to consider during this process.

The Decision Tree also recommends considering the percent positivity rate for tests. DOH recommends caution if this figure is above 5%. These data can be accessed via the [DOH risk assessment dashboard](#). Between 8/25-8/31, the most recent date range for which DOH reports this metric, **Cowlitz County's percent positivity rate was 3.9%**.

School districts in Clark and Cowlitz Counties are coordinating their school reopening plans within the two-county region. Clark County is currently at a moderate level of COVID activity, and has been in this range at least since the week of August 17. More information about Clark County can be found [here](#).



In general, CCHHS will consider recommending expanded in-person learning, beginning with the youngest students, after COVID-19 activity remains in the moderate range for at least three consecutive weeks. After each expansion, COVID-19 activity will again need to remain in the moderate range for at least three consecutive weeks before recommending additional groups of students for in-person learning.

High COVID-19 activity: DOH recommends distance learning with the option for limited in-person learning who need it most – such as children with disabilities. Sports and extracurricular activities should remain on pause.

Moderate COVID-19 activity: DOH recommends distance learning as described above, with gradual expansion of in-person education, beginning with elementary students. Younger students under the age of 10 benefit the most from in-person learning while also posing less risk for transmitting COVID-19 than older students. Most sports and extracurricular activities should remain on pause.

Low COVID-19 activity: DOH recommends full-time in-person learning for all elementary students and hybrid learning for middle and high school, eventually moving to in-person for middle and high school.

Cases by specimen collection date

The table below displays the number of COVID-19 cases by specimen collection date. These data have been used to construct the Epidemiologic curve and School reopening graphs. The specimen for the first COVID-19 case in Cowlitz County was collected on 3/11/20.

	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1		1	1	1	7	0	2			
2		0	3	1	7	2	1			
3		1	0	1	4	11	5			
4		1	2	2	6	10	3			
5		0	4	7	3	4	2			
6		2	0	3	11	10	1			
7		2	1	1	9	3	0			
8		0	0	8	23	1	2			
9		0	0	5	21	0	2*			
10		1	0	4	16	2	3*			
11	1	0	0	2	7	1	2*			
12	0	0	0	5	7	1	0*			
13	1	0	0	1	17	0	0*			
14	0	2	0	2	9	1				
15	0	2	1	5	12	2				
16	1	1	0	4	9	3				
17	0	2	0	11	9	3				
18	0	0	2	4	4	1				
19	2	1	0	6	1	3				
20	0	1	1	4	10	2				
21	2	1	0	3	9	2				
22	3	4	0	8	6	3				
23	1	0	1	5	7	2				
24	2	0	0	6	9	1				
25	2	0	0	5	3	2				
26	0	0	1	5	0	6				
27	0	7	0	5	5	1				
28	2	1	0	3	7	2				
29	0	7	0	9	4	5				
30	1	2	0	8	5	0				
31	0		3		4	12				

*Due to lags in reporting, data from the prior five days may be incomplete. Please note that incomplete data counts may be different between this table and the LHJ notification date table. In addition, this table excludes cases with missing data for specimen collection date.

Cases by LHJ notification date

Case count: 583 (2 cases currently missing a specimen collection date).

Community members have been interested in COVID-19 cases as they are reported to CCHHS. The table below displays the number of COVID-19 cases reported to CCHHS each day. Cowlitz County's first COVID-19 case was reported to CCHHS on 3/20/20.

	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1		2	6	1	11	3	1			
2		0	5	2	6	7	4			
3		0	1	0	3	3	4			
4		1	1	1	3	6	10			
5		1	2	1	1	5	2			
6		1	1	6	14	7	2			
7		0	2	5	4	7	4			
8		1	3	3	9	6	0			
9		1	0	1	7	1	0			
10		1	0	6	26	8	3			
11		0	0	3	9	1	4			
12		1	0	4	7	2	1*			
13		1	0	4	23	3	2*			
14		0	0	2	5	0	0*			
15		0	0	8	12	1				
16		2	0	1	11	1				
17		1	0	3	14	4				
18		0	1	8	5	2				
19		0	1	11	2	2				
20	2	4	1	1	11	3				
21	1	1	1	2	4	2				
22	0	0	0	7	8	0				
23	0	2	1	6	8	3				
24	0	3	0	5	11	3				
25	2	0	0	5	5	2				
26	4	0	0	5	4	2				
27	2	0	0	2	9	3				
28	3	0	0	1	7	4				
29	0	7	0	11	1	2				
30	1	1	0	6	8	2				
31	1		0		5	4				

*Data from the current day and prior two days may be incomplete. Counts may be different between this table and the Specimen collection date table due to incomplete data and the fact that most cases are reported to us after the specimen collection date.

Indicator definitions

Epidemiologic curve

This indicator is the average number of cases identified each day in Cowlitz County, over a week's time, based on the specimen collection date. This graph only displays case counts and does not involve a denominator. Because of reporting lags, the last 6 days of data are considered incomplete and are therefore greyed out.

Data source: CCHHS case log, including cases reported to CCHHS as of 8:30am on the "Updated" date on the first page of this report.

Case rate

This indicator is the number of COVID-19 cases identified each week in Cowlitz County and Washington State, divided by the population of each region, then multiplied by 100,000 to get a rate per 100,000. Weeks are labeled by week start date. Date of illness onset is typically used; the specimen collection date is used for cases who are asymptomatic or who are missing illness onset date. Recent data points are greyed out to align with "Incomplete" dates on the dashboard.

Data source: Case counts obtained from the WA DOH [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#), under "Epidemiologic Curves". Data are typically downloaded on the date of this report. Population denominator obtained from Washington State Office of Financial Management [Population Estimates for 2020](#).

Testing rate

This indicator is the average number of tests performed each day, over a week's time, in Cowlitz County and Washington State, divided by the population of each region, then multiplied by 100,000 to get a rate per 100,000. This indicator is based on the specimen collection date. Recent data points are greyed out to align with "Incomplete" dates on the dashboard. Note that these data include multiple negative test results for one individual, while all positive test results after an individual's first positive result are excluded.

Data source: Test data obtained from the WA DOH [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#), under "Testing". Data are typically downloaded on the date of this report. Population denominator obtained from Washington State Office of Financial Management [Population Estimates for 2020](#).

Cases by specimen collection & LHI notification dates

Specimen collection data are used to calculate the graphs in the Epidemiologic curve and School reopening graphs. Cases are also reported by LHI notification date due to community interest. Note that daily and total counts will be different between these two tables because the LHI notification date is typically after the specimen collection date.

Data source: CCHHS case log, including cases reported to CCHHS as of 8:30am on the "Updated" date on the first page of this report.

Percent positivity rate

This indicator is the number of positive test results received each week, divided by the total number of tests performed that week. It is based on the specimen collection date. Note that these data include multiple negative test results for one individual, while all positive test results after an individual's first positive result are excluded. Recent data points are greyed out to align with "Incomplete" dates on the dashboard.

Data source: Test data obtained from the WA DOH [COVID-19 risk assessment dashboard](#), under "Testing Capacity". Data are typically downloaded on the date of this report. Population denominator obtained from Washington State Office of Financial Management [Population Estimates for 2020](#).

Hospitalizations & deaths

These indicators are the number of COVID-19 hospitalizations or deaths each week in Cowlitz County and Washington State, divided by the population of each region, then multiplied by 100,000 to get a rate per 100,000. Date of illness onset is typically used for deaths; the specimen collection date is used for cases who are asymptomatic or who are missing illness onset date.

Hospitalizations are displayed by admission date. We are not sure how weeks are labeled (i.e., start date vs end date) but will include that information in future reports as available. Recent data points are greyed out to align with "Incomplete" dates on the dashboard.

Data source: Hospitalization counts obtained from the WA DOH [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#), under "Current Status". Data are typically downloaded on the date of this report. Population denominator obtained from Washington State Office of Financial Management [Population Estimates for 2020](#).

School reopening

This indicator can be used to understand how COVID-19 activity in Cowlitz County compares to the metrics outlined in the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) and DOH's Decision Tree for reopening schools. It is a population rate as opposed to a count. The numerator is the total number of cases over a two-week time period, based on the specimen collection date. The denominator is the April 1, 2020 Cowlitz County population estimate provided by the Washington State Office of Financial Management. Our last step is multiplying this figure by 100,000 to give us a rate per 100,000. Because of reporting lags, the last 6 days of data are considered incomplete and are therefore greyed out. The reported figure is for the two-week time period ending on the 6th day prior to this report date. DOH COVID-19 activity level groups are color-coded for reference.

Data sources: CCHHS case log, including cases reported to CCHHS as of 8:30am on the "Updated" date on the first page of this report. Population denominator obtained from Washington State Office of Financial Management Population Estimates for 2020.