

# Cowlitz County COVID-19 data

Updated 10/14/20

This report provides information that Cowlitz County residents can use to understand COVID-19 activity in our community. Cowlitz County Health & Human Services (CCHHS) will generally update these data every other Wednesday or Thursday. School reopening data are still reported weekly on Mondays – the most recent School Data report can be accessed [here](#).

Feedback about this report helps us understand the public's interests, questions, and concerns around this issue. We aim to be as transparent as possible and encourage community engagement with these reports. If you have a question, concern, or comment, please email us at [askcowlitzhealth@co.cowlitz.wa.us](mailto:askcowlitzhealth@co.cowlitz.wa.us). We often update our reports, or release additional information and explanations, in response to the public's input.

Note: Community members have asked about the differences between the numbers we report in our Daily Data Summary and those we use for our School Data report. A description of how we analyze data, and the differences between our various reports, is included on page 4 of this report.

Note: Testing data were unavailable earlier this week. As a result, this week's report only includes data on Cowlitz County cases. We will produce a more comprehensive report next week with our usual list of indicators, including testing levels, percent positivity, comparisons with Washington State, and current trends in underlying COVID-19 activity in Cowlitz County.

## Cases

- A total of **741 Cowlitz County residents**, or 0.67% of the population, have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- An average of 3 cases were reported each day to CCHHS the week of 10/5 – 10/11.
- An average of **3 – 4 cases per day** were identified from specimens collected from Cowlitz County residents the week of 10/2 – 10/8.
- **Past month trend in Cowlitz County**  
In the past month, we saw a sharp increase in cases between the second and third weeks in September, followed by a sharp decrease the last week of September. Cases have remained steady through the first week in October.

Note: This trend is based on the date when a case's specimen was collected, not when the case was reported to CCHHS or reported in our Daily Data Summary. We have complete data for specimens collected through the week of 10/2 – 10/8.

## Most likely source of exposure

For cases reported to CCHHS in the past month, the three most common sources of exposure were:

- **32% Unknown or community transmission**
- **25% Household contact**
- **17% Workplace**

## Hospitalizations

- A total of **44 Cowlitz County residents have been hospitalized with COVID-19**. Fewer than 5 of those were hospitalized for a reason other than COVID-19.

## Deaths

- A total of 8 Cowlitz County residents with COVID-19 have died. **Seven (7) of these deaths were due to COVID-19.**

## *Historical underlying COVID-19 activity in Cowlitz County*

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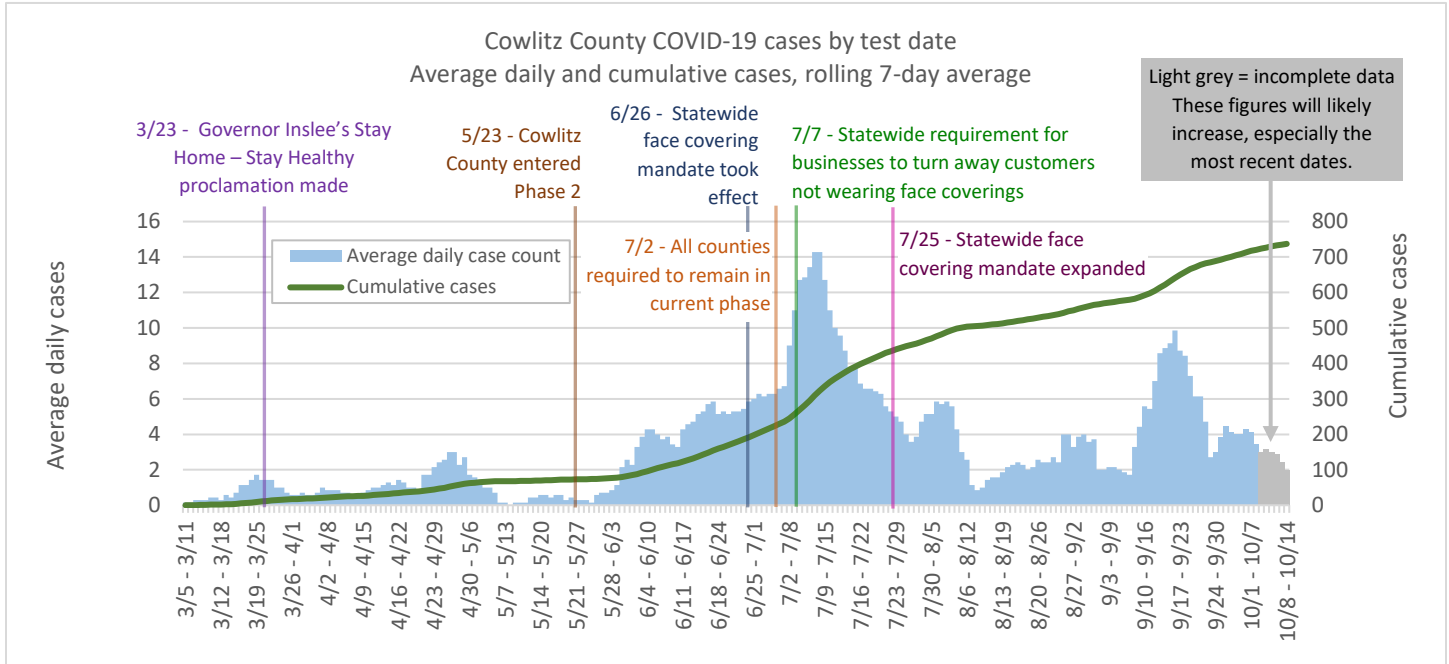
Looking altogether at trends in testing rates, percent positivity, and cases can give us a better sense of how COVID-19 is spreading in our community.

- **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.
- **Sharp increase between the second and third weeks in September.** Testing rates, case counts, and incidence all held fairly steady from mid-August through the second week of September. Between the second and third weeks in September, both case counts and percent positivity more than doubled.

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.

# COVID-19 cases over time

We use the epidemiologic curve to determine how COVID-19 is spreading in our community. The cumulative (total) number of cases is helpful to assess the overall burden of disease in our community. For context, we've also provided the dates when COVID-19 policies went into place in Cowlitz County and statewide. This graph is based on the case's specimen collection date.



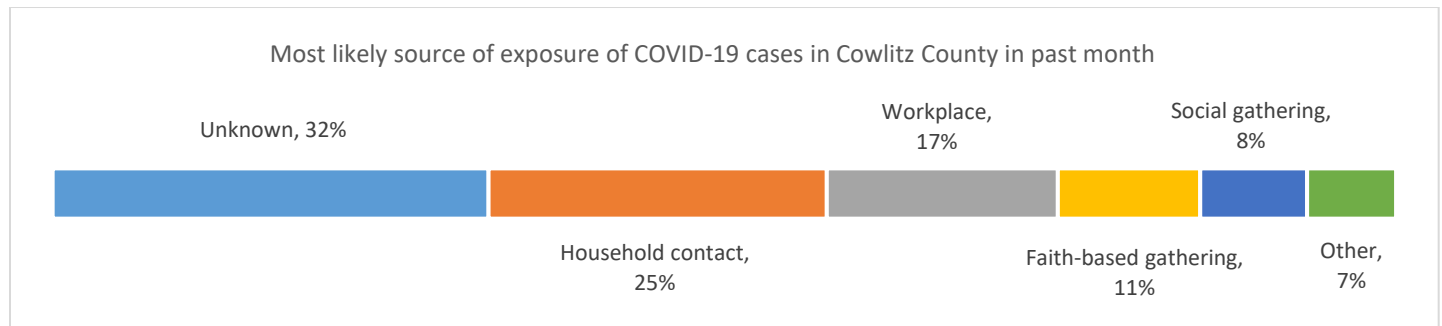
## Most likely source of exposure

While our nurses encourage patients to share information with us, responses to all questions are voluntary and folks are not always willing to disclose where they have been. This impacts our understanding of how patients became infected.

Our data for patients whose source of exposure is “Unknown” includes two categories:

1. Individuals that truly do not know how they were infected and are considered to have become infected in the community (we call this “community acquired”).
2. Those that are listed as “Unknown” because they are not willing to provide that information.

Since this information is disclosed voluntarily, we do not know how many individuals fall into each of these categories.



## Understanding the data in our various reports

Community members have asked about the differences between the numbers we report in our Daily Data Summary and those we use for our School Data report. These reports are based on two different dates – our School Data report uses the specimen collection date, and our Daily Data Summary is based on cases as they are reported to us. **There is typically a 3-4 day lag between when a COVID-19 specimen is collected and when the case is reported in our Daily Data Summary, so case counts will typically not match between the COVID-19 Data and School Data reports and the Daily Data Summary.**

### COVID-19 testing and reporting

To better understand these data, it is helpful to understand how people are tested for COVID-19, how data are reported to us, and how we report to the public. On the day an individual is tested for the virus that causes COVID-19, a medical practitioner inserts a swab into their nose to collect some fluid from their nasal cavity. We call this date the **Specimen collection date**. This specimen is then sent to a lab to perform the test. If the test is positive, the person is referred to as a COVID-19 case. The lab notifies the public health system of the case, most often their local health department. A case is typically reported to us between 2-3 days after the specimen is collected. We then enter the case into our internal COVID-19 database.

We report case count updates from our internal database in our **Daily Data Summary** the morning of every work day. Updates typically include cases reported to us from 8:30am the prior business day through 8:30am on the day of the report. The vast majority of cases are reported in our Daily Data Summary the day after we receive the case report. Please note that even though individuals can have more than one positive test, we only include the first positive test in our case count.

Day 0	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
<b>Specimen collection date</b> Individual visits a COVID-19 testing site and a specimen is collected		Average time frame when lab reports case to CCHHS		
			<b>Daily Data Summary</b> CCHHS reports updated case counts the morning of each business day. Update includes cases reported to CCHHS since the last update (typically since approximately 8:30am on the previous business day).	

It typically takes 3-4 days between the Specimen collection date and when a specimen is analyzed by the lab, reported to CCHHS, and then provided in our Daily Data Summary. Note that this time frame can be shorter or longer for individual cases.

### COVID-19 data and School data reports are based on the specimen collection date

The Specimen collection date is used most often in our COVID-19 reports. This metric provides a good representation of COVID-19 activity over time for several reasons. First, it is not subject to reporting delays like the Daily Data Summary. In addition, for symptomatic individuals, it is closer to the date when they first experience symptoms, which is a better indicator of when they were infected. Finally, it is consistent with how WA DOH calculates this metric – the 14-day rate on the “Phase and Risk Assessment” tab of its [Risk Assessment Dashboard](#). For these reasons, most of our reports, including the case incidence metric and percent positivity figure reported in our School Data Report, are based on the specimen collection date.

### How will case counts compare to each other between the different reports?

In general, when case rates are decreasing, as they were between mid-September and early October, case counts based on the Daily Data Summary will be higher than cases based on the specimen collection date because of the reporting lag. The same is true if cases increase -- case counts based on the Daily Data Summary date will be lower than cases based on specimen collection date for the same time frame.

## Cases by specimen collection & case report dates

The table below displays the number of COVID-19 cases by the date a case's first positive specimen was collected and the date the case was reported to CCHHS. Future reports will include the number of cases provided in our Daily Data Summary update each day.

The specimen collection data have been used to construct most of the graphs in this and the School Data report. The specimen for the first COVID-19 case in Cowlitz County was collected on 3/11/20. Cowlitz County's first COVID-19 case was reported to CCHHS on 3/20/20.

We do not typically use the date when a case is reported to us, or the date when we include a case in our Daily Data Summary, in data analysis for our COVID-19 data or School Data reports. However, we are providing this information because community members are interested in COVID-19 cases as they are reported to CCHHS and as we report them to the community.

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

\*Due to lags in reporting, data from the prior five days may be incomplete for the specimen collection date, and the current day is not reported. Data from the current day and prior two days may be incomplete for the case report date. Note that one (1) case is currently missing a specimen collection date and 0 cases are missing a report date.

## Indicator definitions

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### *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 most recent 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 (not available this report)*

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. 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.

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 (not available this report)*

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 (excluding multiple tests done on the same day), 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 & CCHHS report dates*

A description of these indicators has been provided in the report.

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 (not available this report)*

This indicator is the number of positive test results received, divided by the total number of tests performed, each week. It is based on the specimen collection date. Note that these data include multiple negative test results for one individual (excluding multiple tests done on the same day), 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 risk assessment dashboard](#), under "Testing Capacity". Data are typically accessed on the date of this report. Population denominator obtained from Washington State Office of Financial Management [Population Estimates for 2020](#).

### *Most likely source of transmission*

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.

### *Hospitalizations & deaths (not available this report)*

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 Washington Disease Reporting System (WDRS), an online databased used for communicable disease reporting in Washington State and administered by the Washington State Department of Health.

Death counts obtained from the 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](#).