

Cowlitz County COVID-19 school data Updated 11/09/20

This report provides information that Cowlitz County residents and school superintendents can use to understand COVID-19 activity in our community as it relates to reopening schools. A longer, more in-depth *COVID-19 Data Report* is also published approximately every other week. The most recent version can be accessed [here](#).

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. We often update our reports, such as including additional information and descriptions, in response to the public's input.

CCHHS current recommendation on school reopening

The Washington State Department of Health's [Decision Tree](#) provides guidance to communities when making decisions about in-person learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. It includes objective metrics and also provides room for schools and health departments to implement the guidelines in a way that best serves their students and communities. Page 2 of this report includes additional principles that CCHHS has developed to use when making our recommendations.

Cowlitz County has re-entered the high activity level. **CCHHS recommends school districts put plans to expand in-person learning to older students on hold as we monitor the recent increase in cases. All students should maintain their current learning modality – students in hybrid learning remain in hybrid, and students in remote learning remain remote.**

If rates remain in the high range for three (3) consecutive weekly reports, we will recommend that the most recently-added groups of students return to remote learning, until rates decrease and remain in the moderate range for three (3) consecutive weekly reports. If rates remain high we will recommend that further groups of students return to remote learning over time.

Most recent data

- Cowlitz County is currently in the **HIGH** level of COVID-19 activity, at **100** new cases/100,000 population/14 days from 10/21 – 11/3.
- Between 10/15 – 10/28*, the most recent complete two weeks of data available from the state, **5.2%** of Cowlitz County COVID-19 tests came back positive. This is **just above** the level at which the state recommends caution for school reopening.
- As of today, **three (3) Cowlitz County residents are hospitalized** with COVID-19.
- Cowlitz County was in the moderate level for four (4) weeks (9/19 – 10/2 through 10/16 – 10/29), and has been at the high level for five (5) days, since 10/17 – 10/30.
- **Caution warranted: New cases and percent positivity are spiking again**
Weekly counts show a rapid increase in new cases starting the third full week in October and has shown no signs of slowing down. Two-week percent positivity has increased more rapidly than the state average over the past month and is currently high enough to warrant additional caution.
- **Be prepared: Longer-term trends show an underlying increase in COVID-19 prevalence since mid-August**
Because percent positivity has increased along with new cases, our increased cases tell us that we have a real increase in the prevalence of COVID-19. This recent spike may continue to a longer-term increase. If this is a temporary spike like we had in July and September, it will likely decrease to a higher level than we were at the third week of October and continue to steadily increase.

**We have moved to a two-week time frame for percent positivity because weekly figures have become erratic and we are hesitant to make policy recommendations based such rapidly-changing figures.*

School reopening recommendation considerations

CCHHS generally bases our recommendations on DOH's [Decision Tree](#). We also add a time parameter – we will generally support expanding in-person learning when COVID-19 activity has remained in the moderate or low range for three (3) consecutive weekly reports.

After each expansion

- If rates remain in the moderate range for three (3) consecutive weekly reports, we support expanding hybrid in-person learning to additional students in older age groups.
- If rates increase and remain in the high range for three (3) consecutive weekly reports, we will recommend that the most recently-added groups of students return to remote learning, until rates decrease and remain in the moderate range for three (3) consecutive weekly reports. If rates remain high we will recommend that further groups of students return to remote learning over time.
- If rates spike into the high range but return to moderate before three (3) consecutive weekly reports, we will recommend maintaining students' current learning modality; in-person students will remain in-person, while remote students will remain remote.

We use the three-week delay in changes to control disease transmission while preventing schools from switching rapidly between in-person and remote learning, which would be challenging for schools, children, and their families to manage. Our recommendation may also consider other factors, such as when we waited until 2 weeks after Labor Day to decide on a recommendation for in-person learning even though we had been in the moderate range for more than 3 weeks, when our percent positivity exceeds 5%, or if hospitalizations begin trending up.

We acknowledge the difficult balance of weighing the risk of COVID-19 infections in schools with the needs of children and families that in-person school helps address. Our recommendations take into account the needs of the community as a whole. In addition, we encourage parents to make decisions that best suit their children and family. To support these decisions, we encourage local school districts to provide families with the option of keeping their children in remote learning even when in-person learning is provided. We also acknowledge that each school district has different circumstances and will continue to work closely with school districts to provide individualized guidance as local circumstances warrant.

School reopening data time trend

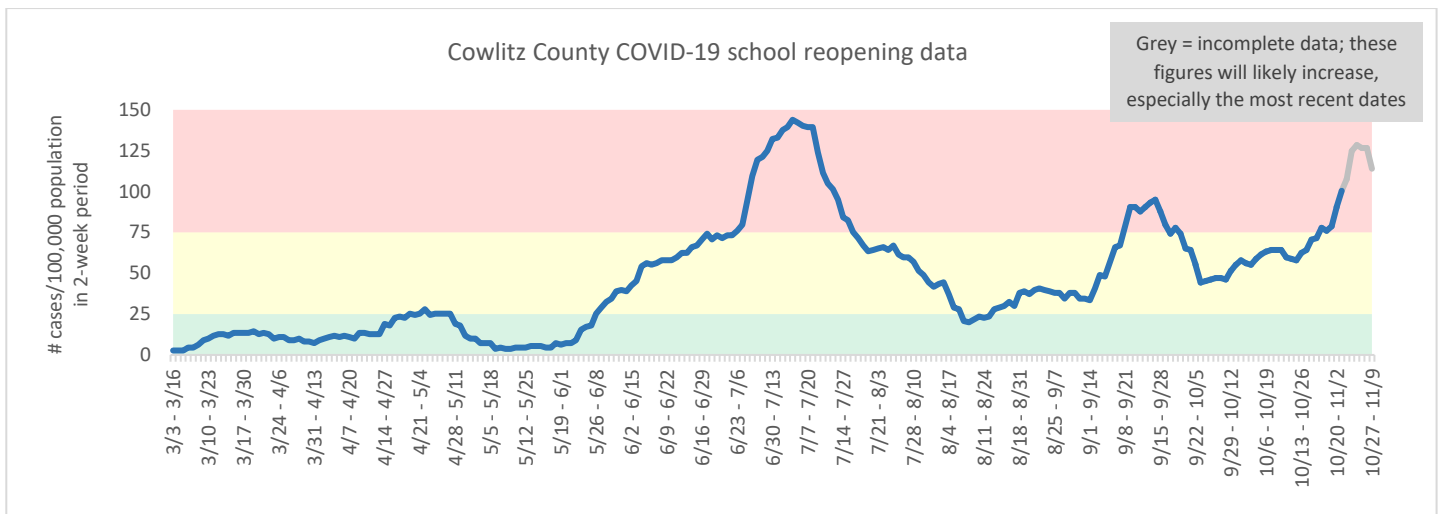
These data illustrate how COVID-19 activity in our community compares to the metrics identified in the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Health’s [Decision Tree](#) for use in deciding when and how to reopen schools.

Note: This chart uses the date when a case’s specimen was collected, not the date when we included the case in our Daily Data Summary. More information on how we analyze and report our data can be found on page 4 of [this report](#).

The calculation for Cowlitz County’s most recent rate is:

$$(111 \text{ total cases from specimens collected between } 10/21 \text{ and } 11/3) / (110,500 \text{ population}) * (100,000 \text{ multiplier}) =$$

100 new cases/100,000 population/2 weeks



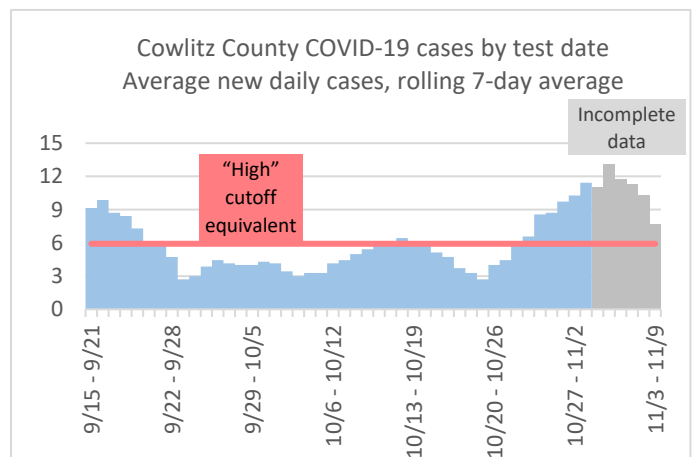
Note on incomplete data

Data in this graph are based on the date when the test was performed and include all cases reported to CCHS by 8:30am on the date of this report. Cases are typically reported to CCHHS one or more days after the date of the test; the vast majority of positive test results are reported to CCHHS within six days of the test date. To account for this lag in reporting, the date range ending in the sixth day before the date of this report is considered the most recent complete figure. More recent data points are considered incomplete and are color-coded grey. Figures in grey will likely increase in future reports once all tests performed on these dates have been reported to CCHHS.

Weekly data for more up-to-date counts

The school metric is based on a two-week rolling rate; looking at case data for rolling one-week time periods can give us a more precise glimpse into how cases are trending. In addition to providing data related to the school reopening metric, we’ll also provide this graph for the most recent 8 weeks. The red line identifies the level above which the weekly rate corresponds to the “high” level for the school metric.

A summary interpretation of these data is available on the first page of this report.



Cases by specimen collection, case report, and Daily Data Summary dates

The table below displays the number of COVID-19 cases by the date a case's first positive specimen was collected, the date the case was reported to CCHHS, and, since September 1, the number of cases reported each day in our Daily Data Summary. A description of how these three dates relate to each other can be found on page 4 of our [10/14/20 Cowlitz County COVID-19 Data report](#).

The specimen collection data have been used to construct most of the graphs in our reports. 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	Daily Data Update	Specimen collection	Report date	Daily Data Update	Specimen collection	Report date	Daily Data Update	Specimen collection	Report date	Daily Data Update	Specimen collection	Report date	Daily Data Update	Specimen collection	Report date	Daily Data Update	Specimen collection	Report date	Daily Data Update	Specimen collection	Report date	Daily Data Update	Specimen collection	Report date	Daily Data Update	Specimen collection	Report date	Daily Data Update
1				1	2		1	6		1	1		7	11		0	3		2	1	2	8	3	4	7	7	-			
2				0	0		3	5		1	2		7	6		2	7		1	4	3	9	6	2	18	15	20			
3				1	0		0	1		1	0		4	3		11	3		5	4	3	2	4	-	15	8	16			
4				1	1		2	1		2	1		6	3		10	6		3	10	4	1	5	-	11*	15	8			
5				0	1		4	2		7	1		3	1		4	5		2	2	-	3	6	14	22*	18	17			
6				2	1		0	1		3	6		11	14		10	7		1	2	-	3	3	6	5*	9	16			
7				2	0		1	2		1	5		9	4		3	7		0	4	-	3	2	3	1*	16*	-			
8				0	1		0	3		8	3		23	9		1	6		2	0	16	3	1	3	0*	23*	-			
9				0	1		0	0		5	1		21	7		0	1		2	0	0	6	2	0		0*	48			
10				1	1		0	0		4	6		16	26		2	8		5	3	2	4	3	-						
11	1			0	0		0	0		2	3		7	9		1	1		2	4	2	1	4	-						
12	0			0	1		0	0		5	4		7	7		1	2		1	1	-	9	5	14						
13	1			0	1		0	0		1	4		17	23		0	3		0	2	-	5	6	3						
14	0			2	0		0	0		2	2		9	5		1	0		11	2	6	7	5	2						
15	0			2	0		1	0		5	8		12	12		2	1		10	4	1	6	7	5						
16	1			1	2		0	0		4	1		9	11		3	1		10	12	5	8	7	7						
17	0			2	1		0	0		11	3		9	14		3	4		4	5	12	6	5	-						
18	0			0	0		2	1		4	8		4	5		1	2		13	8	5	4	4	-						
19	2			1	0		0	1		6	11		1	2		3	2		12	3	-	5	10	16						
20	0	2		1	4		1	1		4	1		10	11		2	3		2	17	-	4	6	10						
21	2	1		1	1		0	1		3	2		9	4		2	2		13	9	28	3	4	6						
22	3	0		4	0		0	0		8	7		6	8		3	0		15	5	14	3	4	3						
23	1	0		0	2		1	1		5	6		7	8		2	3		2	9	4	1	5	6						
24	2	0		0	3		0	0		6	5		9	11		1	3		2	7	5	3	3	-						
25	2	2		0	0		0	0		5	5		3	5		2	2		5	2	7	0	0	-						
26	0	4		0	0		1	0		5	5		0	4		6	2		4	1	-	14	0	8						
27	0	2		7	0		0	0		5	2		5	9		1	3		2	4	-	7	8	6						
28	2	3		1	0		0	0		3	1		7	7		2	4		3	4	7	14	10	1						
29	0	0		7	7		0	0		9	11		4	1		5	2		1	14	19	7	4	10						
30	1	1		2	1		0	0		8	6		5	8		0	2		4	2	0	15	13	9						
31	0	1					3	0					4	5		12	4					4	6	-						

*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. Cases missing a specimen collection date=9. Cases missing a report date=0.

Helpful links & community context to understand school reopening

WA DOH school reopening guidance

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 the Decision Tree 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%.

Indicator definitions

Percent positivity rate

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, other than those performed 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](#).

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. 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](#).