

1/04 UPDATES

Happy New Year! The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is experiencing a backlog of negative test result data for 11/21- 11/30. Complete testing data are available through 11/20/20 and from 12/1/20-12/23/20. Testing data have been challenging to assess over the past couple of months. Today, we report on percent positivity for 12/10-12/23, the most recent two-week time period for which complete testing data are available. We will provide overall testing time trends in future reports after we've been able to more thoroughly analyze the data. More information can be found on the "Testing Capacity" tab on DOH's [Risk Assessment Dashboard](#).

The Washington State Department of Health's [Tools to Prepare for Provision of In-Person Learning](#) 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 to implement the guidelines in a way that best serves their students and communities. School administrators make the final decision in how to provide instruction to their students. This report provides an assessment of COVID-19 activity and related indicators in our community to support administrators' decision-making. In addition, Cowlitz County Health & Human Services' (CCHHS) leadership meets weekly with school district administrators to discuss COVID-19 activity as it relates to school reopening.

We aim to be transparent 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.

COVID-19 in Cowlitz County: Case counts remain high but have leveled off since Thanksgiving

Case counts remain high but have leveled off since the week after Thanksgiving. We saw an average of 34 new cases per day from December 23-29. The [drive-thru clinic](#) at the Fairgrounds does not appear to have increased our case counts. A more thorough analysis will be done in future reports once we have more complete testing data. Similar to Thanksgiving week, we saw a significant dip in cases identified from specimens collected during the week of Christmas. Future reports will allow us to assess where case counts, and underlying COVID-19 activity, land after the holidays.

COVID-19 hospital admissions may have leveled off since early November. However, recent hospitalization data may be underreported for Cowlitz County because high case counts have resulted in reporting backlogs. Future reports can better assess our hospitalization trends. Regional hospital capacity, both acute and ICU beds, remains adequate. Hospital beds occupied by COVID-19 patients are currently below the DOH threshold, and ICU beds occupied by COVID-19 patients have decreased by almost half since early December. We have recently seen a spike in COVID-19 deaths.

We can more thoroughly assess how COVID-19 is spreading in the community when we have complete testing data for more recent dates.

For whom should our community provide in person learning?

We are current at a **HIGH** level of COVID-19 activity, and have been at this level for six (6) weekly reports. At this level, the Department of Health recommends phasing in in-person learning in groups of 15 or fewer students for pre-K through grade 5 and for those with highest needs. More information can be found on page 8 of DOH's [Tools](#) document. Specific indicators related to this question are provided on the next page.

Is there adequate access to testing in the community health system for ill students and staff?

YES Students and staff can access COVID-19 testing through their healthcare provider or the [free drive-thru COVID-10 testing clinic](#) at the Cowlitz County Fairgrounds.

Is there adequate capacity in our local health department to investigate confirmed COVID-19 cases, quarantine their close contacts, and assess whether transmission is occurring in the school?

YES CCHHS supports schools in case of an outbreak, including case and outbreak investigation and contact tracing.

Can local public health monitor the level of community spread to determine when a change in education modality is needed?

YES We publish this report weekly to provide relevant data to school districts and the community

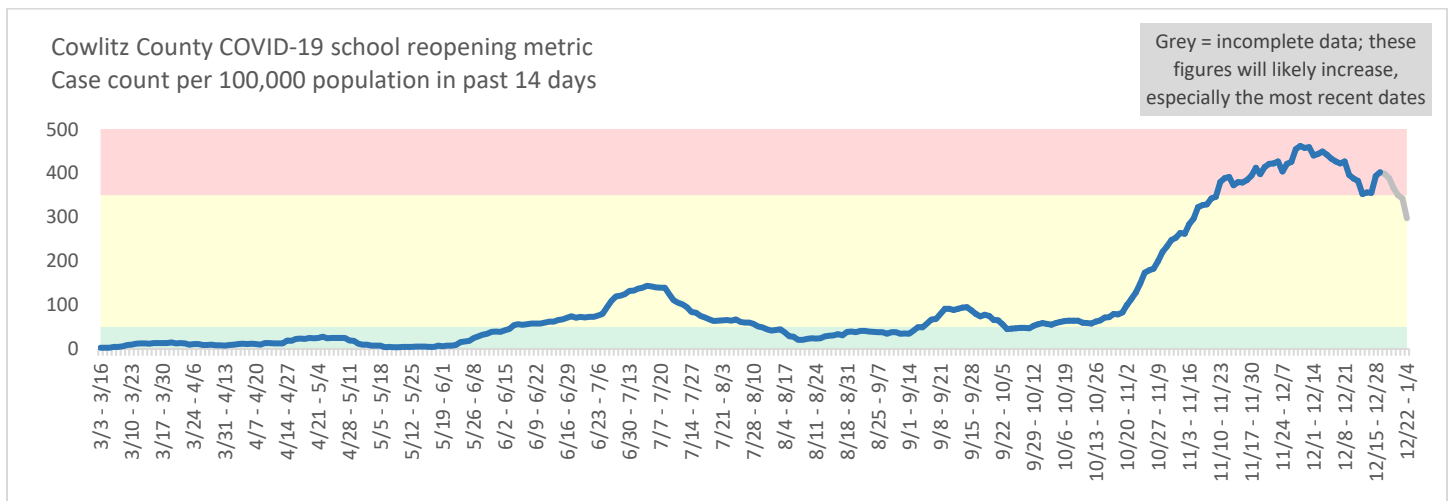
For whom should our community provide in person learning?

Indicator	Most recent time frame with complete data	Current status	Trend over time
Cases in Cowlitz County	12/16 – 12/29	402 cases per 100,000 population in past 14 days	Sharp increase since late October, leveled off since early December
Percent of Cowlitz County tests that are positive <small>(see updates on first page for more details)</small>	12/10 – 12/23	16.5%	Sharp increase from late October to early November, steady increase since early November
Cowlitz County residents admitted to the hospital* with COVID-19	11/29 – 12/12	16 COVID-19 hospital admissions	Sharp increase since mid-October, may have leveled off since early November
Hospital capacity in Southwest Washington**	12/17 – 12/30	ADEQUATE 71% of adult staffed acute care beds occupied; lower than state threshold of 80%	Holding steady, possible slow increase since July
Hospitalized COVID-19 patients in Southwest Washington*	12/24 – 12/30	ADEQUATE 7.9% of adult staffed acute care beds occupied by COVID-19 patients; lower than the state threshold of 10%	n/a
ICU capacity in Southwest Washington**	12/17 – 12/30	71% of ICU beds occupied 7.9% of ICU beds occupied by suspected/confirmed COVID-19 patients	Slow increase since July Sharp increase from late October through early December, sharp decrease since then

*This includes all Cowlitz residents hospitalized with COVID-19, regardless of what county they are hospitalized in. This figure may be an undercount due to reporting backlogs.

**Because patients are often hospitalized in a different county than where they live, DOH reports hospital capacity by region. Southwest Washington includes hospitals in Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Pacific (southern half), Skamania, and Wahkiakum Counties. Hospital capacity is reported by weekly averages because daily trends are erratic and can be challenging to use in decisionmaking.

School reopening time trend



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 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. Daily counts prior to September 2020 are no longer provided but can be accessed in our [Dec 28th School Data Report](#).

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.

	Sept 2020			Oct 2020			Nov 2020			Dec 2020			Jan 2021			Feb 2021		
	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	2	1	2	8	3	4	9	7	-	53	26	31	3*	2	-			
2	1	4	3	10	6	2	24	15	20	32	56	25	0*	53*	-			
3	5	4	3	2	4	-	19	8	16	49	37	56	0*	40*	-			
4	3	10	4	1	5	-	19	15	8	38	39	37		0*	147			
5	2	2	-	3	6	14	26	17	17	25	20	-						
6	1	2	-	3	3	6	28	9	16	13	25	-						
7	0	4	-	3	2	3	9	16	-	45	78	79						
8	2	0	16	3	1	3	4	22	-	60	33	78						
9	2	0	0	6	2	0	33	24	48	36	33	40						
10	5	3	2	4	3	-	31	20	24	34	32	32						
11	2	4	2	1	4	-	28	21	-	38	58	32						
12	1	1	-	9	5	14	23	15	37	11	23	-						
13	1	2	-	5	7	3	22	27	17	15	17	-						
14	11	2	6	7	5	2	17	13	-	38	39	97						
15	10	4	1	6	7	5	7	18	-	57	27	40						
16	10	12	5	8	7	7	48	37	59	38	34	27						
17	4	5	12	6	5	-	33	25	34	41	26	34						
18	13	8	5	4	4	-	48	16	29	28	69	30						
19	12	3	-	5	10	16	31	36	28	18	15	-						
20	2	17	-	4	6	10	30	25	23	8	23	-						
21	13	9	28	3	4	6	24	15	-	50	35	103						
22	15	5	14	3	4	3	8	46	-	26	28	35						
23	2	9	4	1	5	6	70	52	86	27	46	27						
24	2	7	5	3	3	-	41	35	50	28	37	46						
25	5	2	7	0	0	-	31	63	36	5	27	-						
26	4	1	-	14	0	8	2	41	-	15	23	-						
27	2	4	-	8	8	6	30	12	-	14	5	-						
28	3	4	7	14	10	1	16	26	-	80	15	92						
29	1	14	19	7	4	10	13	21	-	67	41	15						
30	4	2	0	16	13	9	59	31	165	34*	45	42						
31				5	6	-				30*	54	45						

*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=22. Cases missing a report date=0.

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.

The calculation is:

$$\frac{\text{Number of cases from specimens collected during most recent complete two-week time period}}{110,500 \text{ population}} \times 100,000 = \text{Current school metric}$$

More information on how we analyze and report our data can be found on page 4 of [this report](#).

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](#).