

3/22 UPDATES

- No new updates today.

The Washington State Department of Health's (state DOH'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.

Today, along with the rest of the state, [Cowlitz County enters Phase 3](#) of the Governor's [Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery plan](#). Phase 3 allows for in-person spectators at high school sports. More information will be provided when available.

Do you have a question or comment? Please email us at Askcowlitzhealth@co.cowlitz.wa.us.

Current COVID-19 status in Cowlitz County

Case counts back down to late October levels and leveled off; hospitalizations decreasing gradually; deaths are steady

We saw an average of 14 new confirmed and probable cases per day from specimens collected March 3-9. Case counts are back down to late October levels and appear to have leveled off. Cowlitz County's new per capita case rate is currently about 30% higher than the state average. Cowlitz County new case counts have decreased by about two-thirds from their peak in January.

Since late November, new COVID-19 hospital admissions among Cowlitz residents have been decreasing gradually and mostly on par with the state per capita average. COVID-19 hospital admissions among Cowlitz County residents have decreased by about half from their late November peak.

Because counts are so small, trends in new COVID-19 deaths among Cowlitz residents have been erratic. Overall, since November, this trend has been somewhat steady and holding just above the state per capita average. Deaths lag behind cases and hospitalizations; we expect deaths to eventually decrease following our decrease in cases and hospitalizations.

For whom should our community provide in person learning?

We are now at a **MODERATE** level of COVID-19 activity. The state DOH [Tools](#) document recommends considering case incidence and test positivity, as well as trends in cases and hospitalizations, when making decisions about in-person learning. 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, the Family Health Center, or Walgreens or Rite Aid pharmacies. Visit CCHHS' [COVID-19 Testing](#) website for more information. In addition, Kelso School District is participating in the Governor's [in-school testing program](#), which will [begin operating mid-March](#).

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?

These data are accessed Monday morning of each week. More current data may be available online.

	Most recent time frame with complete data	Current status	Current trend over time	Where to find the most current data for this indicator on the Roadmap to Recovery Metrics webpage
Cases	2/24– 3/9	183 cases per 100,000 population in past 14 days	Sharp decrease through February which appears to have leveled off. New case counts have decreased by about two-thirds from their peak in January.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scroll down to “COVID-19 Risk Assessment Dashboard” 2. Click on the “COVID-19 Disease Activity” tab 3. Select “Cowlitz County” from the dropdown “Select a County” menu 4. The default view is a 14-day rate.
Percent of tests that are positive	2/23 – 3/1	9.6%	Has most likely been decreasing since the beginning of February.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scroll down to “COVID-19 Risk Assessment Dashboard” 2. Click on the “Testing Capacity” tab 3. Select the “Percent of positive molecular tests” key metric 4. Select “Cowlitz County” from the dropdown “Select a County” menu
Cowlitz County residents admitted to the hospital for COVID-19 during the past week*	2/22 – 2/28	8 COVID-19 hospital admissions	Gradual decrease beginning in late November. Hospital admissions have decreased by about half from their peak in late November.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scroll down to “COVID-19 Risk Assessment Dashboard” 2. Click on the “COVID-19 Disease Activity” tab 3. Under “Select a key metric”, click on “New hospitalizations per 100K people” 4. Select “Cowlitz County” from the dropdown “Select a County” menu.

*This includes all Cowlitz residents hospitalized with COVID-19, regardless of what county they are hospitalized in. Hospitalizations are generally excluded if they are for a reason other than COVID-19.

Note

We have transitioned to using state DOH figures in this report. More details are available in the [3/15/21 Cowlitz County COVID-19 school data report](#).