

5/25 UPDATE - Starting today, we will highlight additional COVID-19-related data in the “Spotlight” section of this report.

This report provides COVID-19 data for Cowlitz County related to K-12 school operations and the Governor’s [Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery plan](#).

School operations are informed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) [Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Prevention](#) guidance and the Washington State Department of Health’s (state DOH’s) [K-12 Schools 2020-2021 Guidance](#).

The CDC and state DOH provide recommendations school administrators can use when making decisions about how and when to offer in-person learning. These are recommendations, not requirements. We support the recommendations put forth by the CDC and state DOH, and recognize that each district is making decisions that balance the needs of students and faculty with protecting their overall health and safety. School administrators are ultimately responsible for making decisions about education settings and modes. We will continue to be a reliable source for COVID-19 information and data that schools can rely on to make informed decisions about operations.

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

Current COVID-19 status in Cowlitz County

Cases have decreased since early April and may have leveled off; new per capita hospitalizations among 35-49-year-olds are on track to exceed the rate among older adults

We saw an average of 14 new confirmed and probable cases per day from specimens collected May 10 - 16.* Weekly case counts began to decrease in early April and may have leveled off. New case counts are falling in most areas and all age groups in the county. Woodland experienced a bump in mid-April which appears to have recently leveled off. Adults aged 65 and older continue to have the lowest per capita new case rate of any age group. Youth aged 0-19 experienced the largest proportional increase in cases from mid-March to mid-April; we are investigating possible drivers of this trend. Cowlitz County’s new per capita case rate is currently on par with the state average.

New COVID-19 hospital admissions among Cowlitz residents have decreased since mid-April; this decrease may be leveling off.& The per capita new hospitalization rate for Cowlitz County residents aged 50 and older has decreased since peaking in April; this rate is increasing for 35-49-year-olds and this age group is currently on track to exceed the hospitalization rate among older residents.

Because counts are so small, trends in new COVID-19 deaths among Cowlitz residents have been challenging to assess. Overall, new deaths appear to have decreased since the end of January and are currently on par with the state per capita average.®

For school operations

We are currently at a “Substantial” level of COVID-19 community transmission.

- Our case incidence rate currently aligns with “Substantial” levels of transmission and is decreasing or has leveled off.
- Our percent positivity currently aligns with “Substantial” levels of transmission and may be decreasing.

Roadmap to Recovery

Cowlitz County is currently in Phase 3 and will reopen along with the rest of the state on June 30 unless statewide ICU capacity exceeds 90%. Statewide ICU occupancy is currently at 83%; it currently exceeds January 2021 levels but is still below the threshold.

*Available on the state DOH’s [Data Dashboard](#) on the “Epidemiologic Curves” tab under “Cases” and “Cowlitz County”.

&The state DOH’s [COVID-19 Risk Assessment Dashboard](#) displays hospitalization data for Cowlitz County residents. It is important to note that these data are weekly totals that produce small numbers and erratic rates for our county. We can make more meaningful conclusions about time trends when we look at rates for longer time frames, such as two- or four-week averages. Hospitalization trends in this report are based on these longer time frames.

®Death counts available on the state DOH’s [Data Dashboard](#) on the “Epidemiologic Curves” tab under “Deaths” and “Cowlitz County”. Per capita death rates are not available on the state DOH dashboards.

Note: Demographic data are analyzed internally and not available on the state DOH data dashboards.

Cowlitz County COVID-19 indicators

Case incidence and percent positivity are used to inform the state DOH's [K-12 Schools 2020-2021 Guidance](#); case incidence and hospital admissions were previously used to inform the Governor's [Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery plan](#); statewide ICU occupancy is still used in reopening decisions.

	Most recent time frame with complete data	Current status	Recent trend over time	Where to find the most current data for this indicator
Two-week case incidence*	5/3 – 5/16	192 cases per 100,000 population in past 14 days	• Decrease since early April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit the state DOH's Roadmap to Recovery Metrics webpage. 2. Scroll down to "COVID-19 Risk Assessment Dashboard" 3. Click on the "COVID-19 Disease Activity" tab 4. Select "Cowlitz County" from the dropdown "Select a County" menu 5. The default view is a 14-day rate.
Percent of tests that are positive	4/28 – 5/4	8.4%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharp increase beginning in mid-March • May have decreased since mid-April 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit the state DOH's Roadmap to Recovery Metrics webpage. 2. Scroll down to "COVID-19 Risk Assessment Dashboard" 3. Click on the "Testing Capacity" tab 4. Select the "Percent of positive molecular tests" key metric 5. Select "Cowlitz County" from the dropdown "Select a County" menu
Cowlitz County residents admitted to the hospital for COVID-19 during the past week**	5/7 – 5/13	6.3 hospital admissions per 100,000 population in the past 7 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease since mid-April • May have leveled off recently 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit the state DOH's Roadmap to Recovery Metrics webpage. 2. Scroll down to "COVID-19 Risk Assessment Dashboard" 3. Click on the "COVID-19 Disease Activity" tab 4. Under "Select a key metric", click on "New hospitalizations per 100K people" 5. Select "Cowlitz County" from the dropdown "Select a County" menu.
Statewide ICU occupancy	5/12 – 5/18	83%	• Currently exceeding January 2021 levels but still below threshold	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit the state DOH's COVID-19 Data Dashboard. 2. Click on the "Healthcare System Readiness" tab. 3. Click on "WA HEALTH ICU Occupancy"

*The CDC case incidence figure is expressed in a 7-day time frame while the state DOH uses a 14-day time frame. Divide this figure by 2 to convert to the CDC figure.

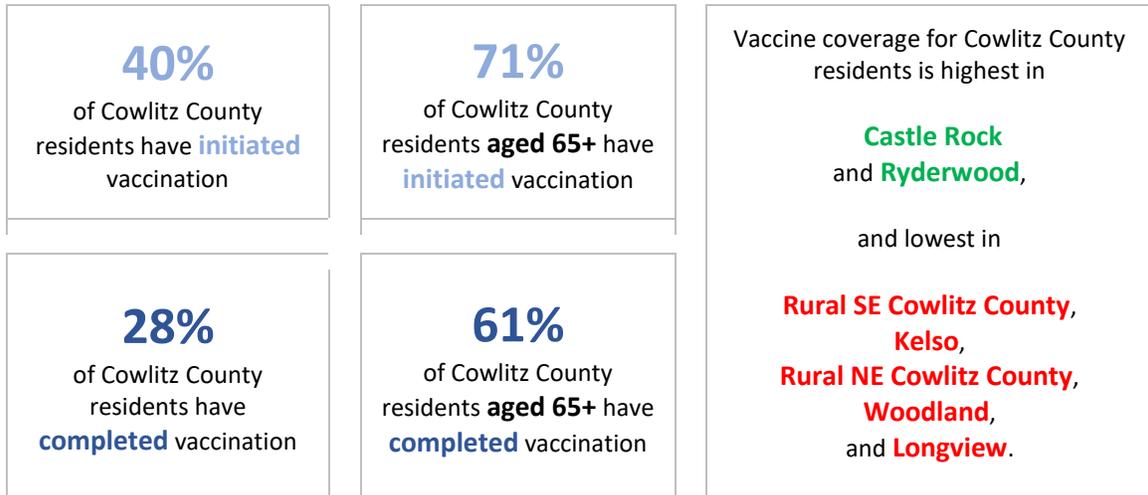
**This includes all Cowlitz residents hospitalized with COVID-19 in Washington State, regardless of what county they are hospitalized in. Hospitalizations are generally excluded if they are for a reason other than COVID-19.

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](#).

Spotlight: Vaccine Coverage in Cowlitz County

Note: The data in this report are current as of 5/17/21. Data included on the state Department of Health's [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#) may be more current and therefore not comparable to these figures. Future vaccine reports will compare Cowlitz County rates to state figures for the same time frame when possible.

Key findings



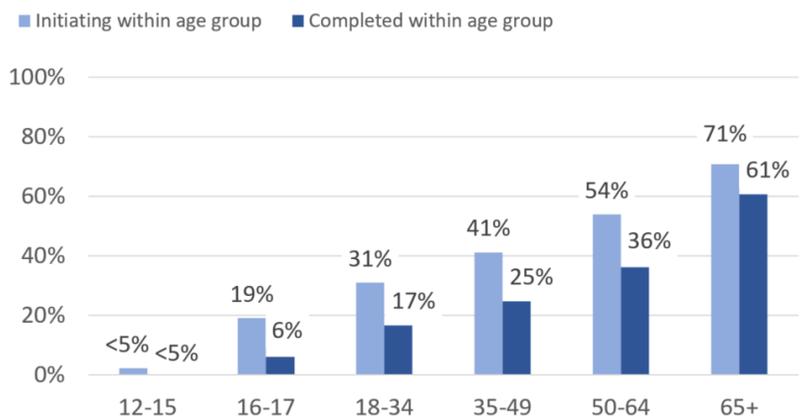
Vaccine coverage by age

Vaccine coverage increases with age in Cowlitz County.

Fewer than 5% of residents aged 12-15 have initiated the COVID-19 vaccination series, compared with 71% of residents aged 65 and older.

Note
Younger residents were generally eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine more recently than older adults. This likely explains some of the difference in coverage rates.

Percent of Cowlitz County residents initiating and completed vaccination, by age group



Vaccine coverage by region

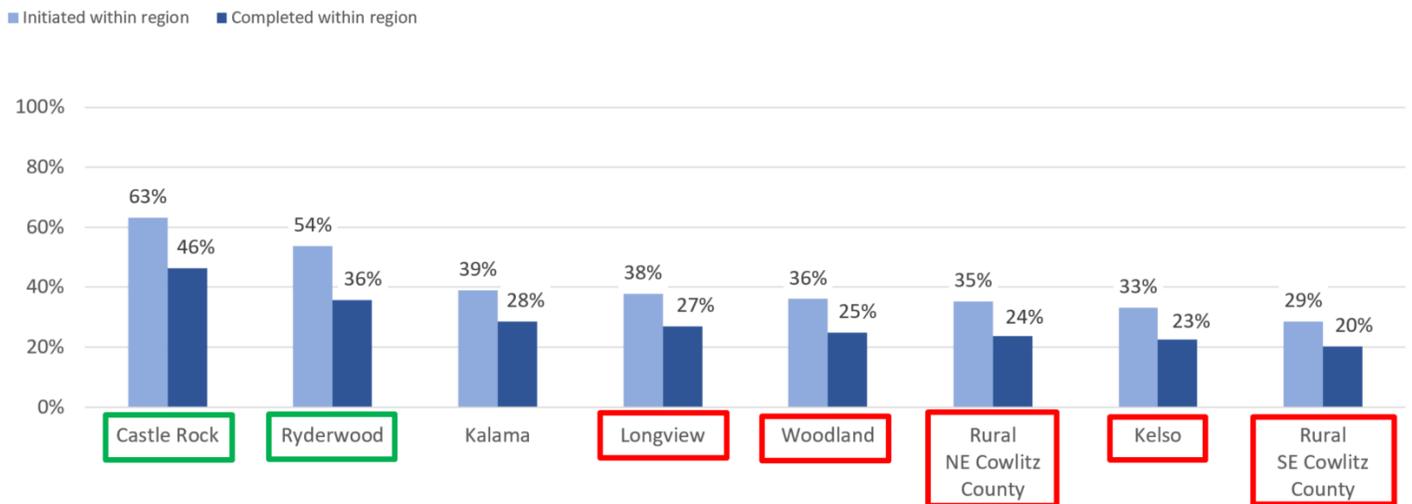
Vaccine coverage varies by region in Cowlitz County. Regions with higher coverage rates than the county average are identified with a green box while those with lower rates are identified with a red box.

Rural NE Cowlitz County includes Silver Lake and Toutle; Rural SE Cowlitz County includes Ariel and Cougar.

63% of Castle Rock residents, compared with 29% of Rural SE Cowlitz County residents, have initiated COVID-19 vaccination.

Note
We saw on the previous page that vaccine coverage varies by age. And, the population in some areas of the county are older than in other areas. These regional differences in age likely explain some of the difference in coverage rates.

Percent of Cowlitz County residents in each region initiating and completed vaccination



Technical notes

Regions with high and low vaccine coverage rates are statistically different than the countywide average.

We suppress rates when necessary to protect confidentiality and to ensure we are reporting statistically stable figures, including percents smaller than 5% and larger than 95%. This is in line with our data sharing agreement with the state DOH for these data.

Some zip codes (98601, 98616, and 98674) cross county boundaries. Vaccine administration data do not currently identify in which county residents of these zip codes live. As a result, numerators and denominators for regional coverage rates include all residents living in each zip code. Data for Amboy (98601) were not available for this week's report. Population denominators for countywide rates include all people living in Cowlitz County.

Data sources

Vaccine initiation and completion data come from the Washington Immunization Information System, downloaded on 5/17/21. All figures use population denominators for 2020 from the Washington State Office of Financial Management.