

9/8 UPDATES –

- Community members are interested in people who become infected with COVID-19 after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. These are called “breakthrough cases”, where the virus “breaks through” the immunity that the person has from the vaccine. The results from our first analysis of breakthrough case data can be found in [this report](#). We are now working on a more in-depth report that will be published in the coming weeks.
- Recent case counts may be higher than they appear because the Washington State Department of Health is behind in processing case reports. This backlog is expected to be resolved by Thursday.

This report is published every other Wednesday to provide a narrative of current COVID-19 trends and data not available elsewhere online. This report references data obtained from the Washington State Department of Health’s COVID-19 [Data Dashboard](#) as well as more detailed in-house analysis of case, hospitalization, death, and other COVID-related data.

Do you have a question or comment about this report, or a suggestion for what to include in a future Spotlight section? Please email us at Askcowlitzhealth@co.cowlitz.wa.us.

COVID-19 cases at all-time highs and may have leveled off; 10 Cowlitz residents admitted to the hospital and at least 1 resident dying from COVID-19 each day

Cowlitz County saw an average of 90 new confirmed and probable cases per day from specimens collected August 24-30. Weekly new case counts saw a thirteen-fold increase between early July and mid-August and appear to be holding steady at all-time highs. Statewide case counts have increased over nine-fold, are also at all-time highs, and continue to increase, though the increase has slowed. Cowlitz County’s new per capita case rate is currently almost double the state rate. A previous [report](#) found that the vast majority of Cowlitz County cases are among residents who are not vaccinated.

Cowlitz County saw an average of 10 residents hospitalized for COVID-19 each day from August 23-29. New COVID-19 hospitalizations in Cowlitz County have spiked dramatically since early July and may still be increasing or have leveled off. The new COVID-19 hospitalization rate has hit an all-time high in both Cowlitz County and statewide. Cowlitz County’s new per capita hospitalization rate is currently over three times the state average.

Cowlitz County has seen an average of at least one resident dying from COVID-19 each day in August. Due to reporting lags, death counts are considered incomplete for the prior 4 weeks. Consequently, final August death counts may eventually be higher. New COVID-19 deaths in Cowlitz County increased in August and have exceeded the previous all-time high. Cowlitz County’s new per capita COVID-19 death rate is currently over three times the state average.

Daily COVID-19 tests have increased three- to four-fold since early July in Cowlitz County. The Cowlitz County testing rate is currently about 25% lower than the state average.

For school operations (based on K-12 guidance from the state DOH and CDC)

Based on the Levels of Community Transmission on the [CDC’s COVID-19 Data Tracker Integrated County View](#), we are currently at a “High” level of COVID-19 community transmission, with a **one-week** case rate of 573 cases/100,000 population and a percent positivity of 25%.

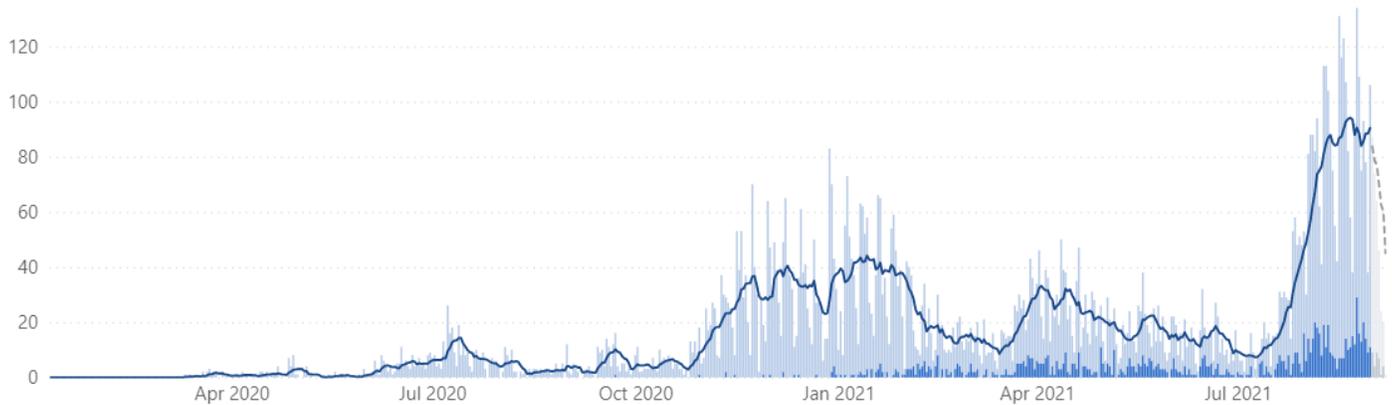
Note that the CDC’s case rate is a one week case rate, which differs from the two-week case rate used in Washington State. Cowlitz County’s most recent **two-week** case incidence rate is 1,130 cases/100,000 population.

Cowlitz County COVID-19 Epidemiologic Curve

This epidemiologic curve was screenshot from the Washington State Department of Health (state DOH) [Data Dashboard](#). The most current version of this curve can be found on the “Epidemiologic Curves” tab under “Cases” and “Cowlitz County”.

CASE COUNTS

● Probable Cases ● Confirmed Cases ● Incomplete (Probable Cases) ● Incomplete (Confirmed Cases) — Total Cases (7 day avg.) - - - Incomplete (7 day avg.)



Active cases

COVID-19 cases are considered “active”, or contagious, for 10 days after their symptom onset, or, for asymptomatic cases, 10 days after their test date. There are currently an estimated 820 identified active COVID-19 cases in Cowlitz County.

Deaths

The number of deaths reported by the state DOH includes both confirmed and suspect deaths. Confirmed COVID-19 deaths are those with a positive COVID-19 test (molecular or antigen) and have COVID-19 listed on the death certificate. Suspected COVID-19 deaths are those that occur within 28 days of a positive COVID-19 test but do not have COVID-19 listed on the death certificate. Suspect deaths are removed from the state’s count if COVID-19 is later ruled out as the official cause of death following a clinical review. A clinical review may instead reclassify a suspect death into a confirmed death. As a result, the number of suspect deaths in the most recent month or two may decrease if they are ruled out or reclassified to “confirmed”. All confirmed and suspect COVID-19 deaths undergo a clinical review in Cowlitz County.

	2020										2021									Total
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	
Suspect death	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Confirmed death	0	0	0	0	5	1	1	0	6	18	18	15	6	6	8	12	8	30	2	136
Total deaths	0	0	0	0	5	1	1	0	6	18	18	16	6	6	8	12	8	30	2	137

Additional information on COVID-19 deaths (as of 8/26; these figures not updated each biweekly report)

- Over 95% of confirmed deaths had underlying conditions.
- 35% of confirmed deaths were associated with a long-term care facility.

Variants

- Genetic sequencing of COVID-19 viruses allows public health to identify which variants of COVID-19 are circulating.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [SARS-CoV-2 Classifications and Definitions website](#) provides information on variants being tracked in the US.
- The latest statewide variant report can be found [here](#).