Cowlitz County COVID-19 data   *Updated 10/20/21*

10/20 UPDATES –

- No updates today.

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 report? Please email us at Askcowlitzhealth@co.cowlitz.wa.us.

Cases have leveled off or are slowly decreasing; hospital admissions may be leveling off;
1-2 residents dying of COVID-19 each day

Cowlitz County saw an average of 43 new confirmed and probable cases per day from specimens collected October 4-10. Weekly new case counts have seen a steep dropoff since the end of September and may be leveling off. Statewide case counts have been steadily decreasing since mid-September. Cowlitz County's new per capita case rate is currently about one-third higher than the state rate. A recent report found that Cowlitz County case rates since the emergence of the Delta variant are 3-4 times lower among residents who are fully vaccinated compared with those who are not vaccinated.

Case counts are currently decreasing in most age groups in the county, with the exception of 12-17-year-olds. Case counts in this age group have leveled off, and this group currently has the highest case rate of any age group. Case counts are declining in all regions of the county for which we have sufficient data to measure time trends.

Cowlitz County saw an average of 3 residents admitted to a hospital for COVID-19 each day from October 4-10. New COVID-19 hospitalizations among Cowlitz County residents have decreased since their peak in late August and has been slowly declining since the end of September. Cowlitz County's new per capita hospitalization rate is currently about two-thirds higher than the state average.

On average, more than two (2) Cowlitz County residents died from COVID-19 each day in September. Due to reporting lags, death counts are considered incomplete for the prior 4 weeks. Consequently, final September death counts may eventually be slightly higher. New COVID-19 deaths in Cowlitz County have been somewhat steady since around mid-August. Cowlitz County's new per capita COVID-19 death rate is currently about four times the state average.

Testing data will not be available until November. Details available in the "NOTE" on our COVID-19 Data webpage.

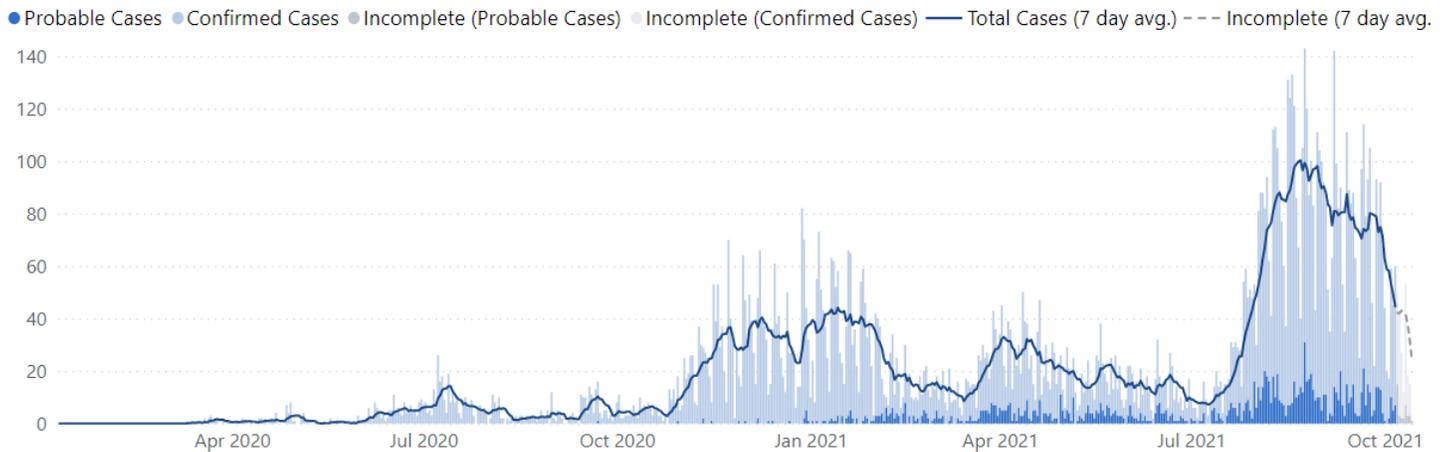***For school operations (based on K-12 guidance from the state DOH and CDC)***
Based on the Levels of Community Transmission on the CDC's COVID-19 Data Tracker Integrated County View, we are currently at a "High" level of COVID-19 community transmission, with a **one-week** case rate of 275 cases/100,000 population. Complete percent positivity data are not available.

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 647 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".

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 esimated 450 identified active COVID-19 cases in Cowlitz County. Note that these only include cases that have been identified via a COVID-19 test. Because we know that some people with COVID-19 are not tested, the true number of active cases is probably higher than this figure.

Variants

➢ COVID-19 tests at doctors' offices or drive-thru testing sites detect the COVID-19 virus but do not differentiate between different variants of the virus. That's why your provider may say they can't test for variants, and our public health nurses can't tell you if you've tested positive for a specific variant. If you are infected with a specific variant, advice and patient care is the same as anyone who tests positive for COVID-19.

➢ Determining whether a person is infected with a variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus requires a lab to perform genomic sequencing on a collected specimen. A specimen is the fluid collected from someone's nose with a test swab. Genomic sequencing looks at the virus genes for mutations specific to the different variants. If a mutation is detected in a specimen, it means that person was infected with the corresponding variant.

➢ Most specimens are not sequenced. Specimens may be chosen for sequencing if they are from a unique case, such as a younger otherwise healthy person who is hospitalized for COVID-19. This may help identify new variants that could be more transmissible or cause more severe illness. The state DOH has also begun to sequence a random sample of specimens across the state to estimate the overall prevalence of variants.

➢ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's SARS-CoV-2 Classifications and Definitions website provides information on variants being tracked in the US.

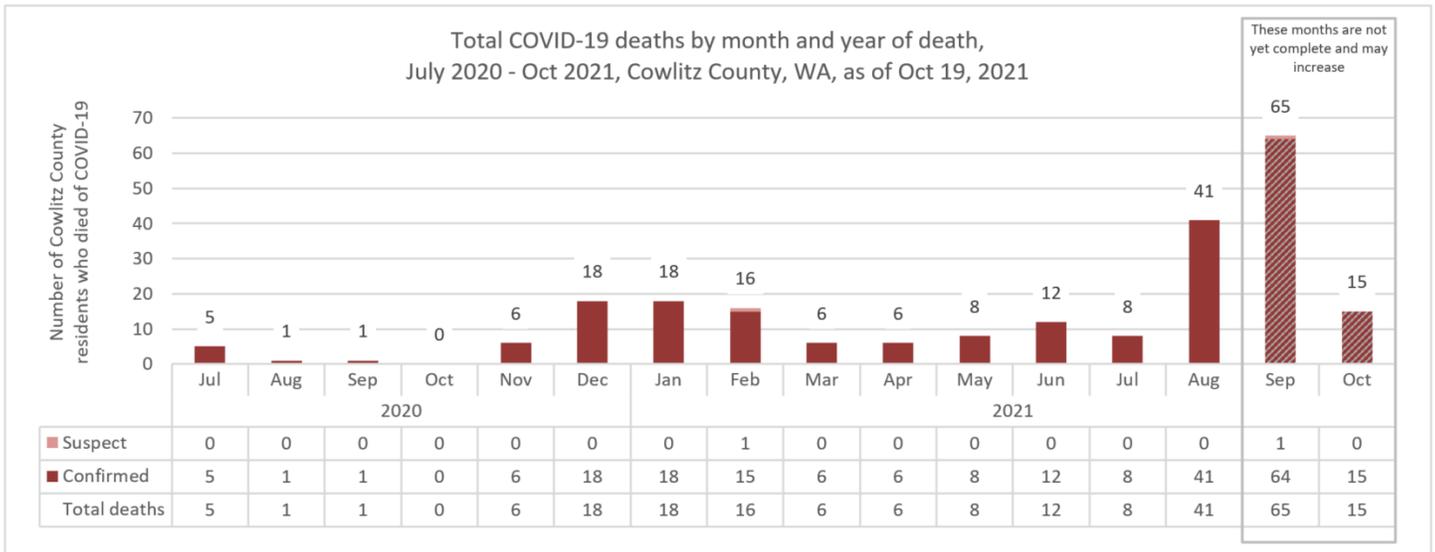➢ The latest statewide variant report can be found here.

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.

Note that the counts on this graph will not match the counts reported on the state DOH's COVID-19 Data Dashboard. The Dashboard reports deaths based on the decedent's test date. Our graph is based on the date of death, which we believe to be more meaningful.

COVID-19 death count to date among Cowlitz County residents:
- **226** total deaths
    - **224** were confirmed
    - **2** is considered suspect

Total COVID-19 deaths by month and year of death, July 2020 - Oct 2021, Cowlitz County, WA, as of Oct 19, 2021

These months are not yet complete and may increase

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
	2020						2021									
Suspect	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Confirmed	5	1	1	0	6	18	18	15	6	6	8	12	8	41	64	15
Total deaths	5	1	1	0	6	18	18	16	6	6	8	12	8	41	65	15

Additional information on COVID-19 deaths

- Over 95% of total confirmed deaths had underlying conditions.

- About one-quarter of total confirmed deaths were associated with a long-term care facility.