

## **11/16 UPDATES –**

- We will begin publishing this report every 4 weeks instead of every 2 weeks. The next report will be published on Wednesday, December 15. More frequent data updates can be found on our [Facebook page](#) and [COVID-19 Data webpage](#). Updates on vaccine data can be found on our [COVID-19 Vaccine webpage](#).

This report is published every four weeks 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](mailto:Askcowlitzhealth@co.cowlitz.wa.us).

### ***Cases continue slowly decreasing; hospital admissions slowly decreasing or leveling off***

Cowlitz County saw an average of 34 new confirmed and probable cases per day from specimens collected October 31 – November 6. Weekly new case counts decreased sharply in the beginning of October and continue to slowly decrease. Statewide case counts appear to be following a similar trend. Cowlitz County's new per capita case rate is currently about one-third higher than the state rate.

Case counts are slowly decreasing or have leveled off among males and females, and in all age groups. Teens aged 12-17 continue to have the highest case rate of any age group. Case counts have leveled off in most regions of the county; those in Castle Rock are decreasing. Per-capita case rates are similar between all regions in the county.

Cowlitz County saw an average of 1 resident admitted to a hospital for COVID-19 each day from October 31 – November 6. New COVID-19 hospitalizations among Cowlitz County residents decreased sharply in the beginning of October and have leveled off or continue to slowly decrease since then. Cowlitz County's new per capita hospitalization rate is currently on par with the state average.

New hospital admissions have leveled off or continue to decrease among both males and females, for all age groups, and in all regions of the county with high enough counts to assess time trends. New per-capita hospital admission rates increase with age; residents aged 80 years and older have the highest rate while those aged 18-34 have the lowest rate. The COVID-19 hospital admission rate among males is slightly higher than among females. Castle Rock and Rural NE County (Toutle and Silver Lake) residents have the highest rates in the county.

New COVID-19 deaths in Cowlitz County have decreased sharply since the end of September. Our new per capita COVID-19 death rate is currently just under four times the state average. Death counts are too small to assess trends among specific demographic groups in the county.

Testing data are not currently available from the state DOH. 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)***

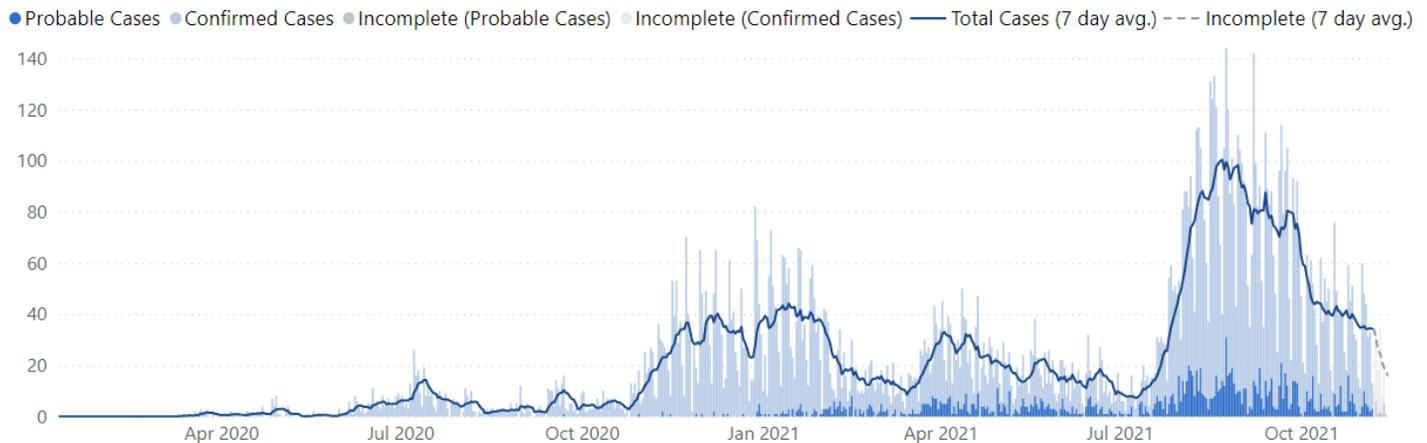
Based on the Levels of Community Transmission on the [CDC's COVID-19 Data Tracker Integrated County View](#), we are currently at a "High" level of COVID-19 community transmission, with a **one-week** case rate of 217 cases/100,000 population. Complete percent positivity data are not available.

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 443 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



## 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 328 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](#).

