

March 18, 2021

A Message from the COVID Safety Team

Dear staff,

As part of our ongoing work to keep you informed about COVID safety practices and protocols we will be sharing regular updates. Each update will include the latest information from local and regional agencies as well as stories and resources within our district.

Topics: BPS vaccine clinics, vaccine eligibility, WA DOH K-12 guidance updates, Whatcom County data and phase 3

Bellingham Public Schools Vaccine Clinics

Our district's COVID safety team has hosted three first-dose COVID vaccine clinics. The second-dose clinics started Tuesday, March 16. These clinics are by appointment only. **If you did not receive your first dose through one of these clinics, we are sorry we cannot schedule you for a second dose.** Second dose allocation is tied to first doses, so we do not have flexibility in offering second doses to people who received their first dose elsewhere.

If you are due for a second dose, you can find an appointment through vaccinefinder.org. You will not be able to see or make an appointment until your eligibility date. You do not have to receive your second dose on the exact day of your eligibility. According to clinical trials, you can receive the second dose between 18 and 42 days after the first dose.





For guidance on expected symptoms and what it means to be vaccinated, read our [safety update from March 8](#). You are not fully vaccinated until two weeks after you have received two doses of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine or one dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine.

Vaccine Eligibility

Vaccine eligibility expanded to [1B Tier 2](#) yesterday, March 17. Individuals in these categories are now eligible:

- High-risk critical workers who work in certain congregate settings: agriculture; fishing vessel crews; food processing; grocery stores; corrections; prisons, jails or detention centers; public transit; remaining first responders
- People 16 years or older who are pregnant or have a disability that puts them at high risk for severe COVID-19 illness.

Recently, caregivers were added into 1A Tier 1:

- Caregivers (licensed, unlicensed, paid, unpaid, formal, or informal) who support the daily, functional and health needs of another individual who is at high risk for COVID-19 illness due to advanced age, long-term physical condition, co-morbidities, or development or intellectual disability. For the caregiver to be eligible, the care recipient:
 - Must be someone who needs caregiving support for their daily, functioning, and health needs.
 - Can be an adult or minor child. For dependent minor children, the caregiver is eligible if that child has an underlying health condition or disability that puts them at high risk for severe COVID-19 illness. For example: a caregiver of a minor child with Down syndrome

If you know someone who is eligible, they can make an appointment through [Peace Health open scheduling](#); you do not need to be a Peace Health patient. For all local providers, search [vaccinefinder.org](#).

WA DOH K-12 Guidance Updates

Washington Department of Health updated their [K-12 Guidance](#) on March 11:

- Fully vaccinated individuals do not have to quarantine if they are a close contact and remain asymptomatic.
- Spacing, group size and required air changes per hour (ACH) for performing arts based on activity.
 - Breath activities, like wind instruments and singing, require nine feet of physical distance, 1-3 ACH between groups, no more than 15 people inside or 50 outside and are limited to 30 minutes of activity.
 - Non-breath activities, like percussion and orchestra, require six feet of physical distance, no additional ACH between groups and do not have a duration limit.
 - Outdoor activity as able is encouraged.
- [Mask guidance](#) is now consistent with CDC recommendations:
 - [DOH](#) does not recommend the use of masks with exhalation valves or vents, or single layer bandanas and gaiters.
 - Read [Bellingham Public Schools mask guidance](#).
- Cleaning guidance now states that cleaning desks with soap and water is sufficient during the school day.

Whatcom County Data and Phase 3

On March 22 Whatcom County is moving to phase 3 of the Healthy Washington Plan, expanding sports spectators, business capacities, and outdoor events. [Read Governor Inslee's update](#).

To stay in Phase 3, Whatcom County must remain under 200 cases per 100,000 AND maintain a 7-day average of five or fewer **new** COVID-19 hospitalizations. Here are our current case rates:

Complete data	Feb 21 – March 6	189.1 per 100,000
Preliminary data	March 3 – March 16	148.7 per 100,000

[Road to Recovery Metrics](#)

[Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#)