



News Release

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New report shows increasing COVID-19 activity in Washington state

OLYMPIA – Today the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) released the latest [statewide situation report](#), which shows COVID-19 transmission continued to increase in eastern Washington as of the end of May, with a possible uptick in western Washington as well. There are still significant differences in transmission from county to county.

The situation in eastern Washington is of greatest concern, particularly in Benton, Franklin, Spokane and Yakima counties. The report estimates cases and deaths in these counties will soon increase substantially if COVID-19 continues to spread at current levels. By population, these counties are in a comparable position to King County at its peak in March. They may require similar efforts to expand hospital capacity and testing, protect the people at highest risk and increase physical distancing.

“The trends we’re seeing point to the critical importance of actions we can all take, like staying six feet apart and wearing cloth face coverings whenever we’re in public, as well as a need for increased response in these harder-hit areas,” said Dr. Kathy Lofy, state health officer at DOH. “We’re working closely with the Governor’s Office, local officials and partners to identify additional ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in these regions. Every single person in our state can and must do their part to help by following public health recommendations.”

While case counts had been trending flat in western Washington, small increases are now being observed. State and local officials will continue to monitor the region carefully to determine whether the slight increase in COVID-19 transmission shown in the report continues to grow. Report findings include possible transmission increases over Memorial Day weekend, but would not include increases that may have occurred following recent protests.

The report also includes a new measure called Progress to Zero for each county, which shows how far cases have declined from the peak level of activity. This measure varies considerably across the state, with some counties showing large decreases and other counties that have not yet reached a peak number of cases.

The most recent estimates of transmission in eastern and western Washington are also available in the state's [risk assessment dashboard](#) in the COVID-19 Disease Activity tab and are updated weekly. DOH partnered with Bellevue-based Institute for Disease Modeling and the Microsoft AI for Health program to develop the report and estimates.

More information on COVID-19 can be found on the [DOH website](#) or at coronavirus.wa.gov.

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