

COVID-19 Breakthrough Report

Oregon's Weekly Surveillance Summary



Breakthrough case report - December 16, 2021

Background

Data for the weekly breakthrough case report will include data through the most recent Sunday and the report will be published on Thursdays.¹ Vaccine breakthrough cases are defined as instances in which an individual tests positive for COVID-19 at least 14 days following the completion of any COVID-19 vaccine series.² Vaccine breakthrough cases that result in hospitalization or death are reported to CDC.

This report includes only those vaccine breakthrough cases which are reported to public health following a positive test result. Many vaccine breakthrough cases are believed to experience no symptoms or minimal symptoms.³ These cases are unlikely to undergo testing for COVID-19 and be reported to public health. Therefore, the true number of vaccine breakthrough cases is unknown. The number of vaccine breakthrough cases must be interpreted within the context of the nearly 2.5 million people in Oregon who have completed a COVID-19 vaccine series.

COVID-19 cases in vaccinated and unvaccinated people

Weekly summary

During the week of December 5–December 11, there were 4,983 cases of COVID-19. 3,476 (69.8%) were unvaccinated and 1,507 (30.2%) were vaccine breakthrough cases. The median age of breakthrough cases was 44 years. 19 (1.3%) breakthrough cases were residents of care facilities, senior living communities or other congregate living settings. 267 (17.7%) cases were 65 or older. There were 53 (3.5%) cases aged 12-17.

¹ The weekly summary, Figure 1, and Figure 2 use the date that cases are reported to OHA, to provide information on the most recently identified cases. All other dates in this report use specimen collection date to align with the breakthrough case definition.

² This definition is consistent with the CDC's definition, available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/COVID-vaccine-breakthrough-case-investigations-Protocol.pdf>

³ Bergwerk, M., Gonen, T., Lustig, Y., Amit, S., Lipsitch, M., Cohen, C., Mandelboim, M., Gal Levin, E., Rubin, C., Indenbaum, V. and Tal, I., 2021. Covid-19 breakthrough infections in vaccinated health care workers. *New England Journal of Medicine*.

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OHA publishes the most up-to-date information about cases from the most recently completed MMWR week. However, not all information about a case's vaccination status may be available at the time of publication. Table 1 includes updated totals of COVID-19 cases by vaccine breakthrough status for the previous six weeks.

Table 1. COVID-19 cases by vaccine breakthrough status over the previous 6 weeks

MMWR week ending	Total cases	Breakthrough cases	Percent breakthrough case
2021-11-06	6,761	2,109	31.2
2021-11-13	5,900	1,711	29.0
2021-11-20	5,855	1,859	31.8
2021-11-27	4,121	1,292	31.4
2021-12-04	6,483	2,046	31.6
2021-12-11	4,983	1,507	30.2

Cumulative summary

Overall, there have been 49,250 vaccine breakthrough cases identified in Oregon. The median age of breakthrough cases is 47 years (range: 11-106). 1,675 (3.4%) breakthrough cases were residents of care facilities, senior living communities or other congregate living settings. 11,534 (23.4%) cases were 65 or older. There have been a total of 1,396 (2.8%) cases aged 12-17. Breakthrough cases have been reported in all 36 counties.

Cases of COVID-19 are much more common in unvaccinated⁴ individuals than in vaccinated individuals (Figure 1). The rate of COVID-19 cases among unvaccinated individuals in the most recent week was nearly 4 times the rate of COVID-19 cases among those who are fully vaccinated. Community spread remains elevated throughout the state and is particularly high in areas with lower vaccination rates. As COVID-19 cases have increased across Oregon, vaccine breakthrough cases have also increased, but at

⁴ Unvaccinated persons are defined as people who have not received an approved COVID-19 vaccine, or who have not completed a COVID-19 vaccine series.

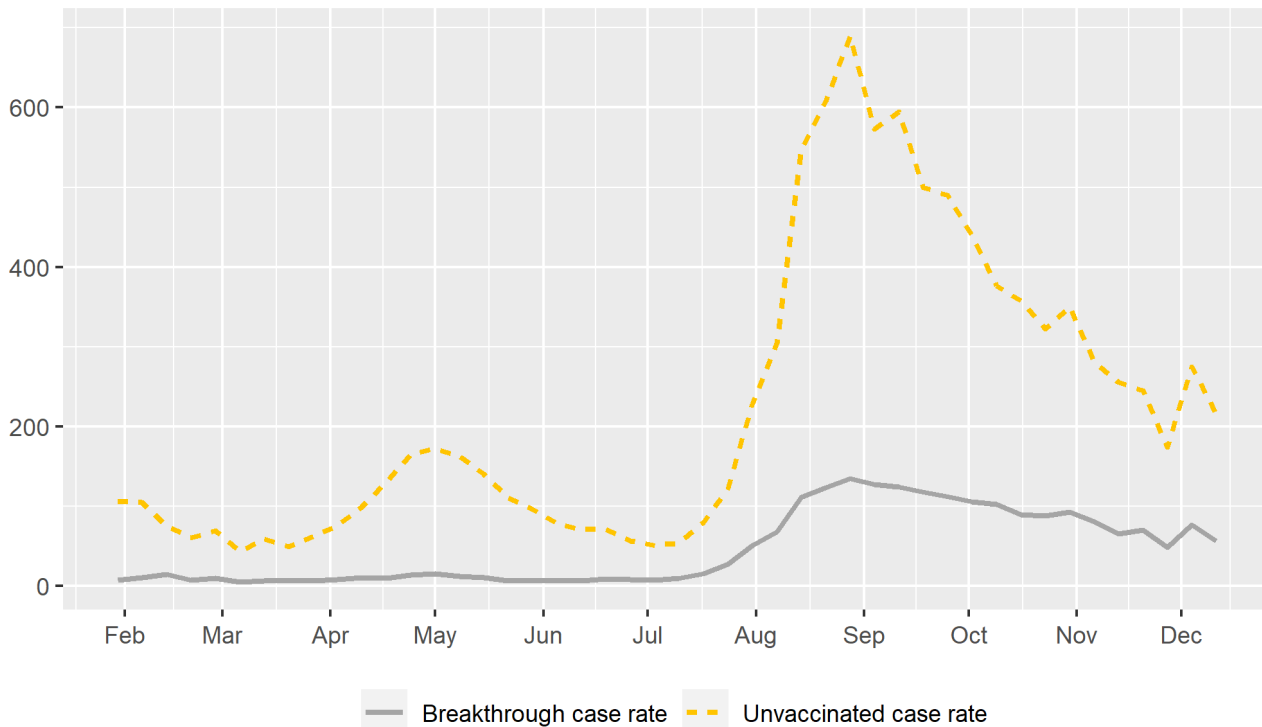
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a much lower rate than in the unvaccinated. Vaccination remains the most effective tool to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Figure 1. COVID-19 cases per 100,000 per week, by vaccination status



Vaccine breakthrough cases and severity

The Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines are all highly effective at preventing severe COVID-19 illness and death. Table 2 includes totals of breakthrough cases by vaccine

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manufacturer and severity. Relatively few breakthrough cases have been hospitalized, and even fewer have died (Figure 2).⁵

Table 2. COVID-19 Breakthrough cases by vaccine manufacturer and severity⁶

Vaccine manufacturer	Primary series completed	Cases	Hospitalizations	Deaths	Cases per 100,000 vaccinated
Pfizer	1,547,433	25,149	963	314	1,625.2
Moderna	945,578	13,298	619	167	1,406.3
Johnson & Johnson/Janssen	234,837	5,910	311	84	2,516.6

⁵ A death is considered to be related to COVID-19 in any of the following circumstances: a) death of a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case within 60 days of the earliest available date among exposure to a confirmed case, onset of symptoms, or date of specimen collection for the first positive test; b) death from any cause in a hospitalized person during admission or in the 60 days following discharge AND a COVID-19-positive laboratory diagnostic test at any time since 14 days prior to hospitalization; or c) death of someone with a COVID-19-specific ICD-10 code listed as a primary or contributing cause of death on a death certificate, regardless of the dates of diagnosis or death.

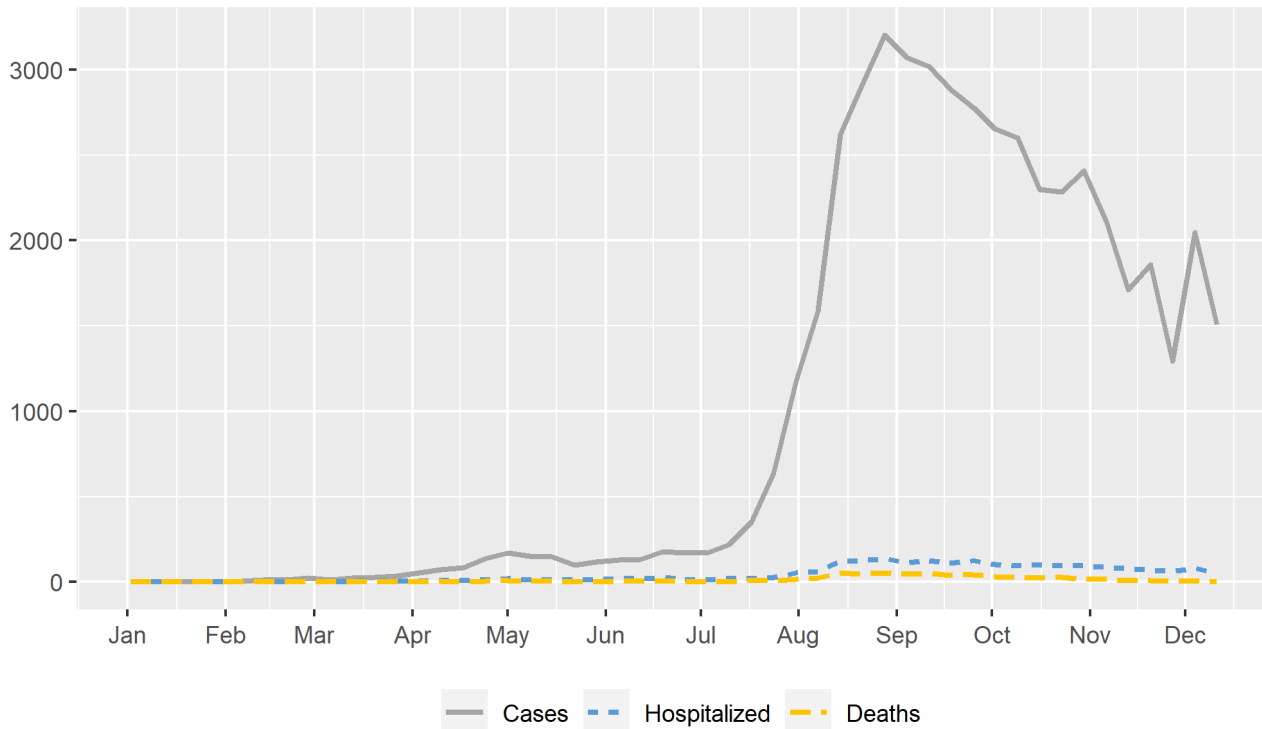
⁶ Table 2 provides the number of cases per 100,000 vaccinated individuals by vaccine manufacturer. Because this figure does not account for the time that each person has been fully vaccinated, it is not a true rate and should not be interpreted as such.

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Figure 2. COVID-19 breakthrough cases, hospitalizations and deaths, by week



To date, 4.4% of all known breakthrough cases have been hospitalized (n=2,177), and only 1.3% have died (n=622).⁷ The median age of the people who have died is 81 (range: 29-103). It is important to note that not all vaccine breakthrough cases are reported to public health, which may cause the proportions in the following section to appear higher than in reality. These figures are not vaccine breakthrough hospitalization or death rates and should not be interpreted as such.

Tables 3, 4 and 5 provide detailed vaccine breakthrough severity data by age, race and ethnicity. Both the risk of hospitalization and death increase with age.

⁷ Cumulative deaths reported here reflect all breakthrough cases known to have died since January 1, 2021. There may be a lag of several weeks between when an individual dies and when their death appears in this report. Increases in cumulative deaths between this and subsequent reports should not be interpreted as individuals who have died within the past week.

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Table 3. COVID-19 breakthrough cases by age group and severity

Age group	Breakthrough cases	Breakthrough hospitalizations	Breakthrough deaths
12-19	2,406	14	0
20-29	6,974	47	1
30-39	8,783	72	2
40-49	8,408	109	10
50-59	7,580	210	21
60-69	6,905	448	94
70-79	5,011	597	167
80+	3,183	680	327
Total	49,250	2,177	622

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Table 4. COVID-19 breakthrough case severity by race⁸

Race	Cases	Hospitalizations	Deaths
> 1 race	456	16	2
American Indian/Alaska Native	658	33	7
Asian	1,181	41	14
Black	763	50	13
Not Available	12,198	288	137
Other	3,555	133	46
Pacific Islander	109	4	1
White	30,330	1,612	402
Total	49,250	2,177	622

Table 5. COVID-19 breakthrough case severity by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Cases	Hospitalizations	Deaths
Hispanic	3,707	98	15
Not Hispanic	26,067	1,396	343
Unknown	19,476	683	264
Total	49,250	2,177	622

⁸ During the case investigation, people are asked to self-report their race, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, country of origin, or ancestry. As of October 2021, 42,423 (80.8%) of the 52,483 persons who identify as "Other" race also self-identify as Hispanic or Latino.

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Table 6 provides the proportion of vaccine breakthrough cases who have died with COVID-19. Approximately 80% of vaccine breakthrough deaths have occurred in patients 70 years and older. The proportion of vaccine breakthrough cases who have died with COVID-19 has increased over time. This trend is likely multifactorial and may be associated with increased COVID-19 transmission in our communities, increased disease severity associated with infection caused by the Delta variant and waning immunity over time in elderly populations.

Table 6. COVID-19 deaths by month, by breakthrough case status⁹

Month	Total COVID-19 deaths	Vaccine breakthrough deaths	Percent vaccine breakthrough deaths
March 2021	122	4	3.3
April 2021	111	6	5.4
May 2021	211	19	9.0
June 2021	108	15	13.9
July 2021	92	16	17.4
August 2021	585	131	22.4
September 2021	907	193	21.3
October 2021	617	167	27.1
November 2021	272	62	22.8

⁹ Data in Table 6 will be updated monthly and will reflect cases from the previous month.

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COVID-19 variants

Table 7. COVID-19 breakthrough cases associated with variants of concern¹⁰

Overall, approximately 7.1% of positive specimens in Oregon have been sequenced. Delta is currently the dominant variant circulating in Oregon. At this time, vaccine breakthrough cases appear to reflect the variants circulating in the community. Additional information on variants can be found here: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/oregon.health.authority.covid.19/viz/GISAIDVariantDashboardUpdated/OregonVariantDashboard>

Subtype	Cases
Omicron (B.1.1.529)	3
Delta (B.1.617.2)	1,859

Table 8. COVID-19 breakthrough cases associated with variants being monitored

Subtype	Cases
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	151
Beta (B.1.351)	17
Gamma (P.1)	63
Epsilon (B.1.427/B.1.429)	40
Iota (B.1.526)	30

¹⁰ As of September 29, OHA will align with CDC's classification of SARS-CoV-2 variants. Variant classification scheme defines four classes of SARS-CoV-2 variants: variants of concern, variants of interest, variants being monitored, and variants of high consequence.

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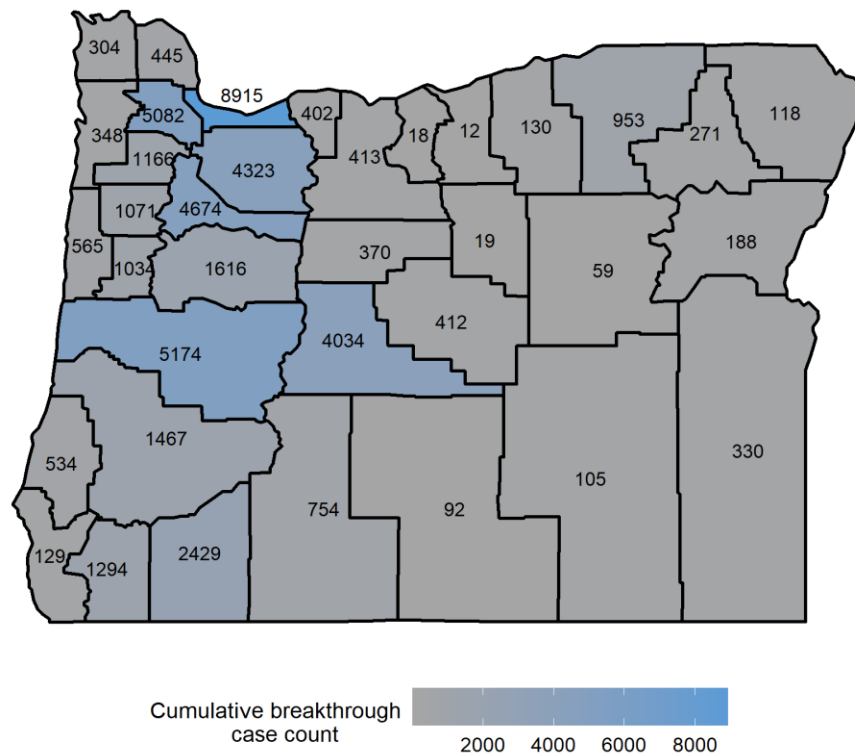
Breakthrough cases by county

Figure 3 and Table 9 show breakthrough cases by county. In general, cumulative breakthrough case counts correspond with the population size of each county. Additional information on cumulative cases can be found here:

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/oregon.health.authority.covid.19/viz/OregonCOVID-19TestingandOutcomesbyCounty/OregonsCOVID-19TestingandOutcomesbyCounty>

Table 9 provides both cumulative and weekly data. The “Cases in previous week” column references the number of vaccine breakthrough cases newly reported between December 5 and December 11. This count may not reflect the full number of vaccine breakthrough cases that occurred during this time, as breakthrough case ascertainment can lag by several weeks.

Figure 3. Map of COVID-19 breakthrough case cumulative counts, by county of residence¹¹



¹¹ Counties that have a total of fewer than 10 cases will appear grey without a data label.

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Table 9. COVID-19 breakthrough cases by county of residence¹²

County	Cumulative cases	Cases in previous week
Baker	188	1-9
Benton	1034	33
Clackamas	4323	159
Clatsop	304	1-9
Columbia	445	18
Coos	534	24
Crook	412	15
Curry	129	1-9
Deschutes	4034	127
Douglas	1467	49
Gilliam	12	0
Grant	59	0
Harney	105	1-9
Hood River	402	11
Jackson	2429	66
Jefferson	370	1-9
Josephine	1294	32
Klamath	754	10

¹² Counties that have a total of fewer than 10 cases will be reported as 1-9 cases.

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County	Cumulative cases	Cases in previous week
Lake	92	1-9
Lane	5174	146
Lincoln	565	12
Linn	1616	59
Malheur	330	1-9
Marion	4674	149
Morrow	130	1-9
Multnomah	8915	287
Polk	1071	29
Sherman	18	1-9
Tillamook	348	19
Umatilla	953	10
Union	271	1-9
Wallowa	118	1-9
Wasco	413	1-9
Washington	5082	182
Wheeler	19	1-9
Yamhill	1166	23