



Mountain Day is Oct. 2! Photo by student Rette Solomon

HEALTHY TOGETHER

Mountain Day Countdown

Coming in just 10 days, we look forward to a full range of Mountain Day activities this year, including the Olympics, Grand March, football and volleyball games, and Marthapalooza.

As we gather to celebrate, we are mindful that Berry's distinctive homecoming occurs in a context complicated by COVID.

Some have asked for clear mitigation guidelines in this time of continuing uncertainty, while others would object strenuously to additional prescriptive rules. Our approach this fall has been to make clear the current levels of risk -- on campus and in surrounding areas -- and to call on the campus community to take these risks seriously and exercise good judgment for the sake of their personal health and out of love for their neighbor.

What does that mean at present?

Local area risk of COVID remains high. We are down from the peak of last week, but **Floyd County risk indicators remain higher than during the crisis last January.** Last week, area counties recorded the greatest number of deaths since the start of the pandemic. There were 1,200 new local cases in the last 14 days, and the fully vaccinated rate is still below 40%.

Campus risk of COVID remains relatively modest. The great majority of students are fully vaccinated (81%). We had 7 new student cases this week and 6 last week.

What are Berry's COVID mitigation guidelines?

1. Exercise good judgment.

Be mindful that the risk of COVID infection is considerably higher when visiting local off-campus establishments (restaurants, stores, events) than when on campus. When you choose to go off campus, be extra careful.

2. Wear a mask in public indoor spaces.

This is the required policy on campus. Refusing to participate on campus is a Viking Code conduct violation.

Small enclosed areas (including cars) also increase risk, especially if some present are not vaccinated.

When you choose to go off campus, where the risk of infection is higher, be extra careful. That's a sign of good judgment.

3. Wear a mask in crowded outdoor spaces.

Outdoor venues are less risky than indoors because the diffusion of air is better. Still, more air is shared with others when in congested spaces, and people nearby may not be vaccinated. Risk increases with prolonged close exposure. Exercise good judgment.

4. Choose to be vaccinated.

The pandemic would likely be remission and we would not have to wear masks if national vaccination rates were high. When was the last time you worried about polio or diphtheria? The medical evidence is clear: COVID vaccines are safe and effective. 98% of medical doctors in Floyd County have taken the vaccine.

Since July 21, the infection rate at Berry of those NOT vaccinated (and with no previous COVID infection) is 33 out of 195. That's an infection rate of 17%. In other words, this group of students (9%) has accounted for 56% of recent cases.

Fully vaccinated students have an infection rate of 1% (23 of 1,725 are "breakthrough" infections).

Confronted with risk and continuing uncertainty, exercise good judgment.

COVID BY THE NUMBERS

BERRY:

Percentage fully vaccinated: 81% students, 97% full-time faculty, 81% full-time staff. Additional percentage partially vaccinated: 3% students, 1% full-time faculty, 4% full-time staff

Moderate / **Yellow** level of risk.

For week of Sept 16 – 22: 7 student cases; 1 employee

Last week. Sept 9 –15: 6 student cases, 2 employees

Number of active cases at Berry: 9

ROME/FLOYD COUNTY:

The number of new cases and hospitalizations declined noticeably this week, although levels are still well above the worst days in January. There were also a significant number of deaths in Floyd County this week.

Percentage of population fully vaccinated: 36%

Additional percentage partially vaccinated: 3%

High / **Deep red** level of risk

161 COVID cases in Floyd and Redmond hospitals

Compared to 3 on June 21

22.7% positive tests in last 14 days

Compared to 13.6% in GA last 14 days

1,200/100,000 new COVID cases in the last 14 days

Compared to 578/100,000 in GA over last 14-day period

Floyd County continues to be double the state average.

VIKING WEEKEND

SEPTEMBER 24-26

<h3>FRIDAY</h3> <p>On Campus Camping with Recreation 7:00 pm-9:00 am Victory Lake <small>Registration link on Berry Connect</small></p> <p>Ford Fight Night 1st Late Night of the Year! 11:00 PM-1:00 AM Ford Courtyard (Front of Ford Gym)</p>	<h3>SATURDAY</h3> <p>S.O.L.E.'s Plane Crash Hike on Lavender Mountain 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM Meet at Jewel Box</p> <p>Solidarity Week Service Day 9:30 AM Kranert Ballroom</p> <p>Men's Soccer vs. Sewanee 12:00 PM Pearson Field</p> <p>Women's Soccer vs. Sewanee PACK THE HOUSE 2:30 PM Pearson Field</p> <p>Solidarity Week "Homecoming" Party 7:00 PM Evans Lawn</p>	<h3>SUNDAY</h3> <p>Black Lives Matter March and Vigil 4:00 PM Begins at College Chapel, ends at Hermann Hall</p> <p>Womens Soccer vs. Berea 1:00 PM Pearson Field</p>
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If you have any COVID-related questions, send an email to

covid-19questions@berry.edu. Our staff will get back to you in a timely manner.