

INFLUENZA SITUATION – SEASON 2025/2026

(Week 16, up to April 19 2026)

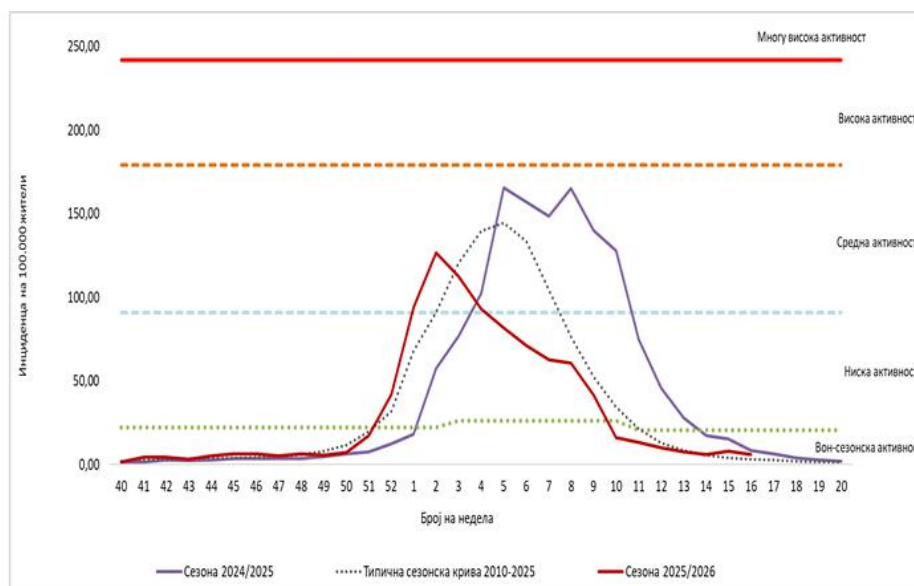
Weekly data

During week 16 of 2026 (13–19 April 2026), in Macedonia, 109 cases ($I = 5.9$ per 100,000) of group-reported patients with influenza/influenza-like illnesses were recorded, which is 24.8% lower compared to the previous week ($n = 145$).

The number of reported cases this week, compared to week 16 of the previous season ($n = 155$), has decreased by 29.7%, while compared to the number for week 16 of the typical epidemic curve (modeled from the last 15 seasons) ($n = 60$), it has increased by 83.1% (Graph 1).

During week 16, the recorded incidence falls within off-season activity levels (Graph 1).

Graph 1. Intensity levels and weekly distribution of influenza/influenza-like illness cases according to the expected epidemic curve (2010–2025), season 2024/2025, and season 2025/2026.



Regarding age distribution, 58 cases are among individuals aged 15–64 years, 19 are persons over 65 years, and 16 cases each are children aged 5–14 years and 0–4 years. The highest incidence (16.6 per 100,000) is registered among children aged 0–4 years.

Cases were reported from 10 Centers for Public Health (CPH/Regional units): Skopje – 38, Prilep – 31, while in Debar, Tetovo, Gevgelija, Ohrid, Shtip, Radovich, Kumanovo, and Strumica the number of cases is ≤ 10 . In the remaining CPH/regional units, no cases of influenza or influenza-like illnesses were reported.

VIROLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE

During the 16th reporting week of 2026, 37 specimens from routine and SARI surveillance were received at the virology laboratory of the Institute of Public Health for laboratory testing, simultaneously tested for Influenza, SARS-CoV-2, and/or RSV.

Among the total tested specimens, no positive influenza cases were detected.

Additionally, 7 cases of RSV were detected (all RSV type B).

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE – Cumulative data

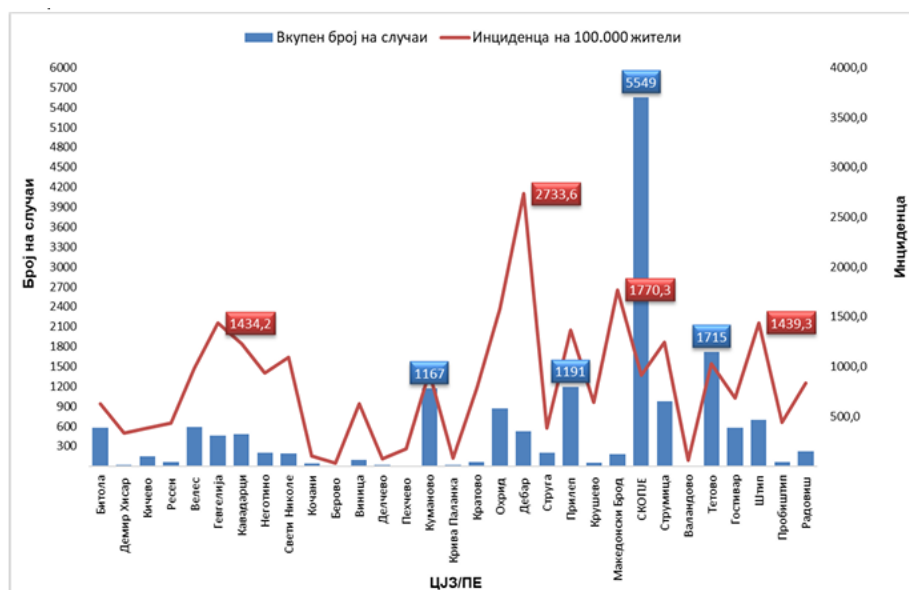
In the 2025/2026 season, the total number of influenza/influenza-like illness cases amounts to 16,976 (I = 924.3 per 100,000).

Compared to the same period of the previous season (n = 25,768), the number of reported cases has decreased by 34.1%, while in relation to the model from the last 15 seasons (n = 20,673), a decrease of 17.9% is registered.

Cumulatively, cases have been reported from all Centers for Public Health (CPH/regional units). The highest number of cases (n = 5,549) was registered in the Skopje region, while the highest cumulative incidence (I = 2,733.6 per 100,000) was recorded in the Debar region (n = 523) (Table 1 in the Annex).

Regarding the distribution of cases by age groups, the largest number of cases was reported in the age group covering the majority of the population (15–64 years) – 9,866 cases (58.1%), while the highest incidence (2,049.3 per 100,000) was recorded in the 0–4 years age group, followed by the 5–14 years age group (1,338.3 per 100,000) (Graph 2, Table 1 in the Annex).

Graph 2. Distribution of seasonal influenza cases by CPH/regional units and incidence per 100,000 population, season 2025/2026.



Distribution of influenza/influenza-like illness cases by month (Table 1 in the Annex):

- October – 338 cases or 2.0%
- November – 438 cases or 2.6%
- December – 1,324 cases or 7.8%
- January – 9,315 cases or 54.9%

- February – 4,336 cases or 25.5%
- March – 861 cases or 5.1%
- April – 364 cases or 2.1%

During the influenza season, four deaths associated with influenza were recorded.

VIROLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE – Cumulative data

Since the beginning of the 2025/2026 season, up to week 16/2026, a total of 1,257 specimens from routine and sentinel SARI surveillance were received at the virology laboratory of the Institute of Public Health. All received specimens were tested for the presence of influenza virus, SARS-CoV-2, and/or RSV.

A total of 126 positive influenza cases were detected:

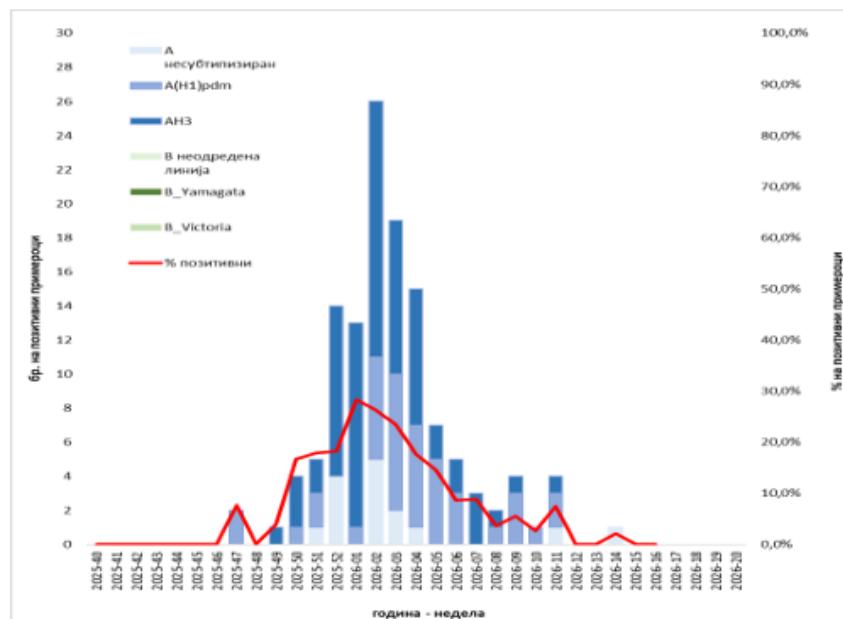
- Influenza A – 126
 - Influenza A(H1)pdm09 – 41 (32.5%)
 - Influenza A(H3) – 70 (55.6%)
 - Influenza A – unsubtype – 15 (11.9%)
- Influenza B – 0

Additionally:

- 26 positive cases of SARS-CoV-2 were recorded
- 153 positive cases of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) were recorded (RSV unsubtype – 5, RSV-A – 40, RSV-B – 108)

Furthermore, 5 other respiratory viruses were detected among the tested samples.

Graph 3. Weekly distribution of the number and percentage of positive influenza samples, routine and sentinel surveillance, Republic of N. Macedonia, 2025/2026.



EPIDEMIOLOGICAL COMMENT

The reported weekly incidence is within off-season activity levels. The results obtained from virological influenza surveillance indicate that there is no activity of the influenza virus. The positivity rate has remained below the 10% threshold for eleven consecutive weeks.

According to these data, influenza virus activity in Macedonia is at a low intensity.

INFLUENZA VACCINATION

Vaccination against seasonal influenza is the most effective protection against this disease. The Institute of Public Health recommends vaccination for the entire population, especially for individuals belonging to so-called risk groups (according to WHO recommendations): elderly persons (over 65 years), children aged 6–59 months, persons older than 6 months with chronic diseases, pregnant women, and healthcare workers.

❖ For the 2025/2026 season, the Ministry of Health provided a free quadrivalent vaccine in a total quantity of 80,000 doses, intended for priority population groups. According to data from the Administration for eHealth, a total of 77,281 individuals from at-risk categories have been vaccinated with free vaccines.

❖ An additional 2,400 doses of commercial vaccines were procured by the Centers for Public Health, intended for the rest of the population not included in the above groups. According to data from the Administration for eHealth, a total of 1,843 individuals have been vaccinated with commercial vaccines.

As of week 16, a total of 79,124 individuals in Macedonia have been vaccinated with either free or commercial vaccines.

EUROPEAN REGION

Source: <https://erviss.org/>

According to the ERVISS report published for week 10 of 2026 on influenza virus activity across the WHO European Region:

- Rates of influenza-like illness (ILI) and/or acute respiratory infection (ARI) are above baseline levels in 1 out of 32 countries in the WHO European Region.
- Influenza virus circulation is at inter-seasonal levels in most reporting countries.
- Regional indicators of SARS-CoV-2 activity have remained at baseline levels.
- The regional percentage of positive RSV tests is declining alongside reduced testing, but remains elevated in several countries. Children under 5 years of age continue to bear the greatest burden of RSV.