

INFLUENZA SITUATION – SEASON 2025/2026

(week 7, up to February 15, 2026)

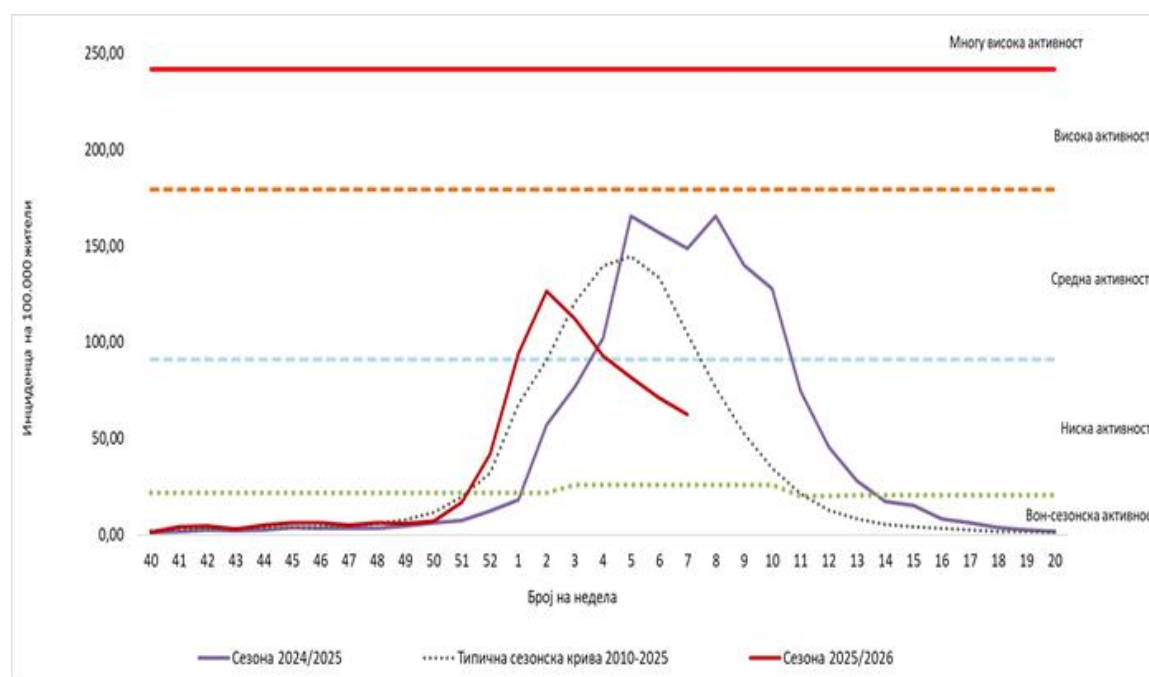
Weekly Data

During the seventh week of 2026 (February 09–15 2026), a total of 1,150 cases ($I = 62.6/100,000$) of influenza/influenza-like illness (ILI) were reported in Macedonia, representing an 11.9% decrease compared to the previous week ($n = 1,306$).

Compared to the seventh week of last season ($n = 2,726$), the number of reported cases has decreased by 57.8%. Compared to the modeled epidemic curve from the previous 15 seasons ($n = 1,919$), there is a 40.1% decrease (Chart 1).

During week 7, the registered incidence remains within the range of low activity (Chart 1).

Chart 1. Levels of intensity and weekly distribution of Influenza/Influenza-like Illness cases according to the expected epidemic curve 2010-2025, season 2024/2025 and season 2025/2026



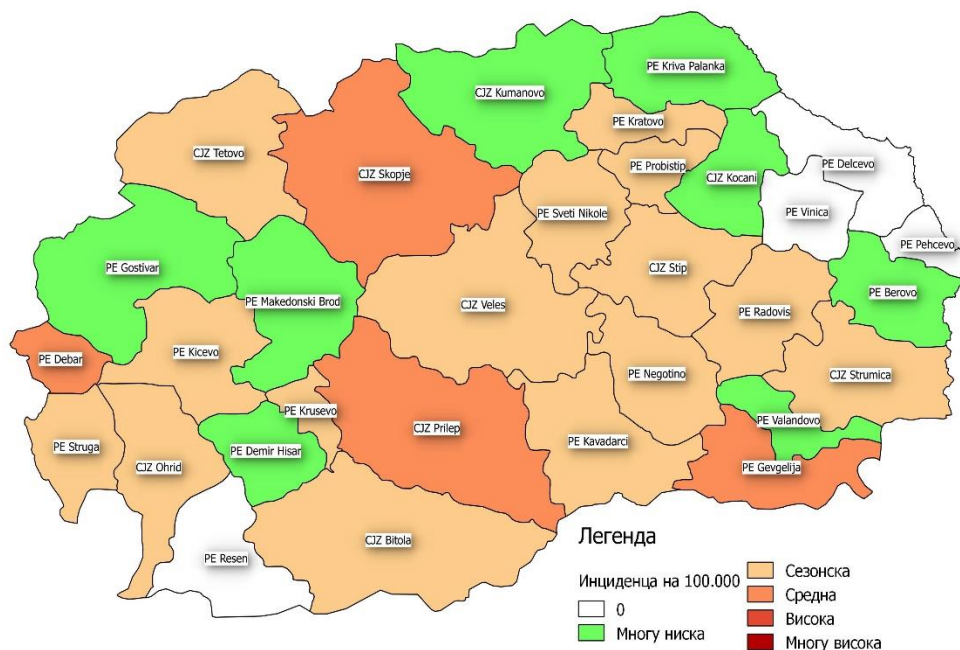
Regarding the age distribution, 621 cases are in the age group 15-64 years, 229 cases are children 5-14 years, 157 – children aged 0-4 years, and 143 cases are above 65 years. The highest incidence ($162.7/100,000$) was registered among children aged 0–4 years.

Cases were reported from 27 Centers for Public Health (CPH/Regional Units). The highest numbers were reported in: Skopje – 585, Prilep – 84, Tetovo – 69, Strumica – 67, Ohrid – 44, Shtip – 42, Bitola – 32, Debar – 32, Gevgelija – 30. In several other municipalities (Kavadarci, Struga, Kumanovo, Radovish, Veles, Kichevo, Sveti Nikole, Negotino, Probishtip, Kochani, Kriva Palanka, Kratovo, Krushevo, Makedonski Brod, Valandovo, Gostivar, Demir Hisar, Berovo), fewer than 30 cases were reported.

No cases were reported in Resen, Vinica, Delchevo, and Pehchevo.

Moderate activity was registered in four regional units, seasonal activity in 15 units, and very low activity in eight units (Cartogram 1).

Cartogram 1. Level of influenza activity according to incidence per 100,000 Inhabitants, week 7 2026



Virological surveillance – Weekly Data

During week 7 of 2026, 34 specimens from routine and SARI surveillance were tested at the virology laboratory of the Institute of public health. All samples were tested for Influenza, SARS-CoV-2, and/or RSV. Out of the total tested specimens, 3 positive cases of influenza were detected – Influenza A(H3).

Additionally, 11 cases of RSV were detected (10 RSV type B and 1 RSV type A).

Two positive results for SARS-CoV-2 were also detected.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE – CUMULATIVE DATA

During the 2025/2026 season, the total number of influenza/ILI cases reached 13,871 ($I = 755.2/100,000$).

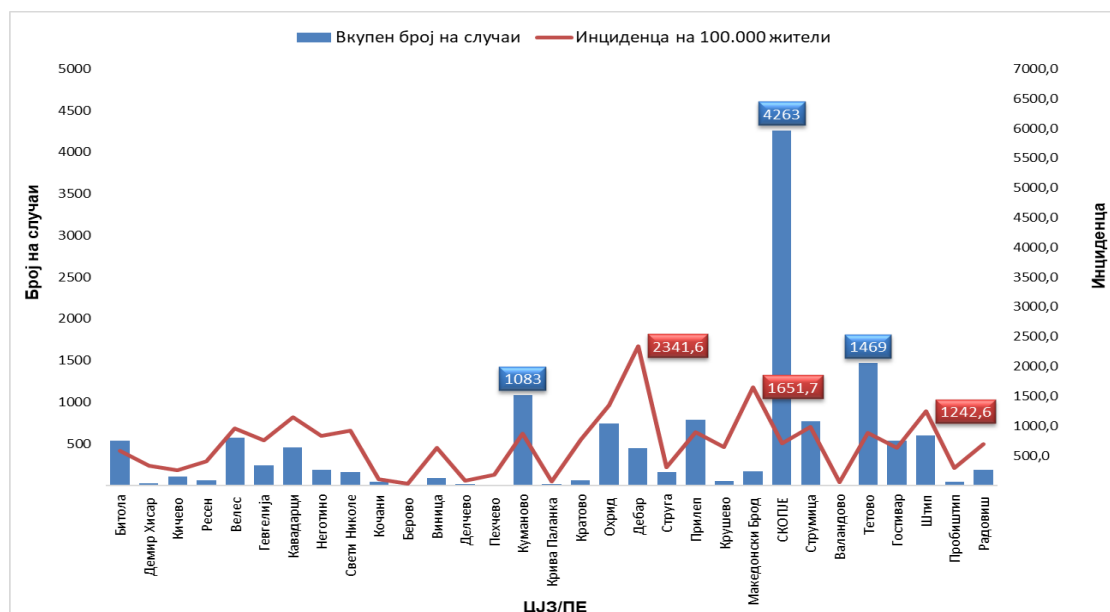
Compared to the same period last season ($n = 14,340$), the number of reported cases decreased by 3.3%. Compared to the 15-season model ($n = 16,647$), a decrease of 16.7% is observed.

Cumulatively, cases have been reported from all Centers for public health. The highest number of cases ($n = 4,263$) was registered in Skopje, while the highest cumulative incidence ($I = 2,341.6/100,000$; $n = 448$) was registered in Debar. (Table 1)

Regarding the distribution of cases by age group, the largest number of cases was reported in the age group that covers the majority of the population (15-64 years) – 8,043 cases (58.0%). The highest

incidence (1,653.5/100,000) was registered in the age group 0-4 years and 5-14 years (1,134.4/100,000). (Chart 2, Table 1 in the Appendix).

Chart 2. Distribution of seasonal influenza cases by CPH/Regional Units and incidence per 100,000 inhabitants, season 2025/2026



Monthly Distribution (Table 1 in Annex)

- October – 338 cases (2.4%)
- November – 438 cases (3.2%)
- December – 1,324 cases (9.5%)
- January – 9,135 cases (67.2%)
- February – 2,456 cases (17.7%)

Four influenza-associated deaths have been registered during the season.

Virological Surveillance – Cumulative Data

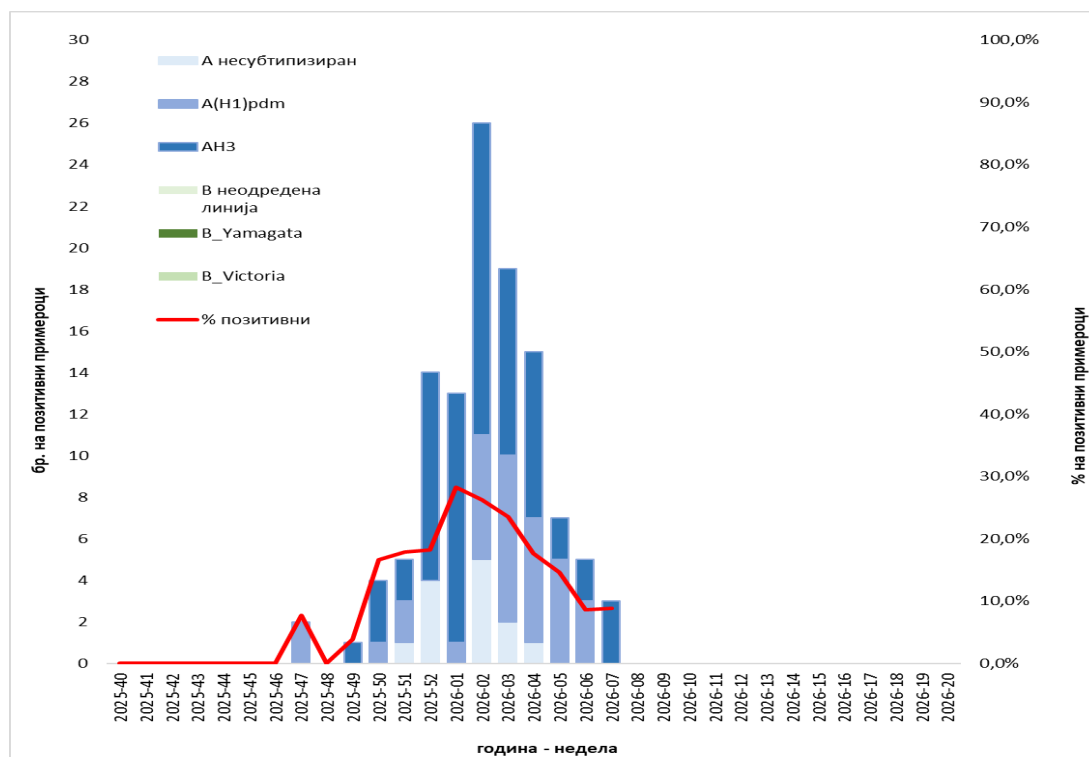
From the beginning of the 2025/2026 season through week 7/2026, 821 specimens were tested.

There are 114 total detected influenza cases:

- Influenza A – 114
 - A(H1)pdm09 – 34 (29.8%)
 - A(H3) – 67 (58.8%)
 - A – untyped – 13 (11.4%)
- Influenza B – 0

Additionally, 9 SARS-CoV-2 cases were also detected, 59 RSV cases (2 untyped, 8 RSV-A, 49 RSV-B) and 5 other respiratory viruses.

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



EPIDEMIOLOGICAL COMMENT

During week 7 of 2026, the decreasing trend in the number of influenza-like illness cases continues. Weekly incidence remains within low activity levels. Virological surveillance indicates regional geographic activity of influenza virus circulation, with positivity below 10%.

According to these data, influenza virus activity in Macedonia is of moderate intensity.

GENERAL PREVENTIVE MEASURES

(Source: <https://sezonskiqrip.mk/>)

General protective measures against influenza apply to all acute respiratory infections and are particularly important throughout the winter season:

- Avoid crowded indoor spaces and close contact with sick individuals.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use disinfectant.
- Heat and regularly ventilate indoor spaces.
- Dress warmly in layers; take warm baths.
- Drink warm beverages (tea, soups), fresh juices, lemon water.
- Consume fresh fruits and vegetables rich in vitamins (especially vitamin C).
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle: adequate sleep, balanced diet, physical and mental activity, stress reduction.

Strong immunity helps but does not guarantee protection from influenza.

If you get sick

- Stay home; do not attend work, school, or crowded places.
- Rest and drink plenty of fluids and food
- Avoid close contact with household members; do not receive visitors.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing/sneezing.
- Wear a protective mask when in contact with others.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Ventilate rooms regularly.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces.
- Seek medical care if you are over 65, have chronic conditions, or if symptoms worsen or persist.

INFLUENZA VACCINATION

Seasonal influenza vaccination is the most effective protection.

The Institute of Public Health recommends vaccination for the entire population, especially high-risk groups (per WHO recommendations):

- Adults over 65 years
- Children 6–59 months
- Persons over 6 months with chronic diseases
- Pregnant women
- Healthcare workers

For the 2025/2026 season, the Ministry of Health provided 80,000 free quadrivalent vaccine doses for priority groups.

Vaccination began on 16 October 2025 and is conducted through Centers for Public Health and Health Centers. Healthcare workers in Skopje are vaccinated at the Institute of Public Health.

As of this report, 77,279 persons vaccinated with free vaccines.

An additional 2,400 doses of commercial vaccines were procured by the Centers for Public Health for the remaining population who do not belong to the above-mentioned groups. These vaccines are available for a specified fee, and vaccination is carried out at the Centers for Public Health and their Regional Units.

According to data from the Administration for Electronic Health, a total of 1,839 persons have been vaccinated with commercial vaccines.

As of week seven, a total of 79,118 persons in North Macedonia have been vaccinated with either free or commercial vaccines.

EUROPEAN REGION

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

According to the ERVISS report published for week six 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 23 of the 35 countries and areas of the WHO European Region reporting data for this week.
- Regional influenza indicators in both primary and secondary healthcare continue to decline from the elevated levels observed earlier in the season, with clear decreases noted in all but a small number of countries. Influenza type A (H3) remains the dominant circulating virus across the Region, and adults aged 65 years and older account for the highest proportion of severe influenza cases.
- Regional indicators of SARS-CoV-2 activity remained at baseline levels.
- Regional RSV indicators are stabilizing at elevated levels; however, there is considerable variability between countries in the phases of their seasonal RSV epidemics. The disease burden and positivity rates remain highest among children under 5 years of age.

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