

Influenza Situation – Season 2025/2026 (Week 8, up to 22.02.2026)

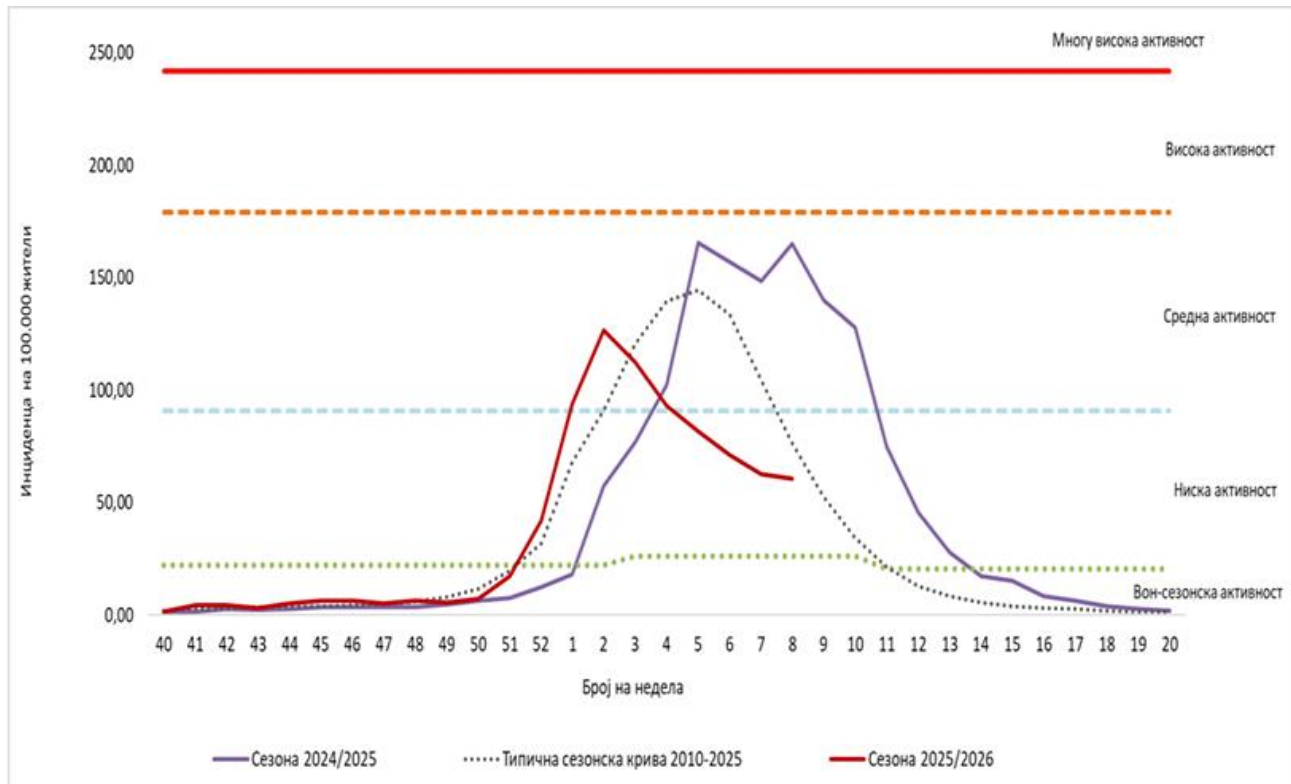
Weekly Data

During the eighth week of 2026 (16–22.02.2026), 1,113 cases ($I = 60.6/100,000$) of influenza / influenza-like illness (ILI) were reported in Macedonia. This represents 3.2% fewer cases compared with the previous week ($n = 1,150$).

Compared with the eighth week of the previous season ($n = 3,035$), the number of reported cases decreased by 63.3%. Compared with the expected epidemic curve for week 8 (modeled from the last 15 seasons) ($n = 1,406$), the number is 20.9% lower. (Graph 1)

During week 8, the recorded incidence corresponds to a low level of activity. (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 the age distribution, 621 cases were reported among individuals aged 15–64 years, 185 cases among children aged 5–14 years, 164 cases among children aged 0–4 years, and 143 cases among persons aged over 65 years.

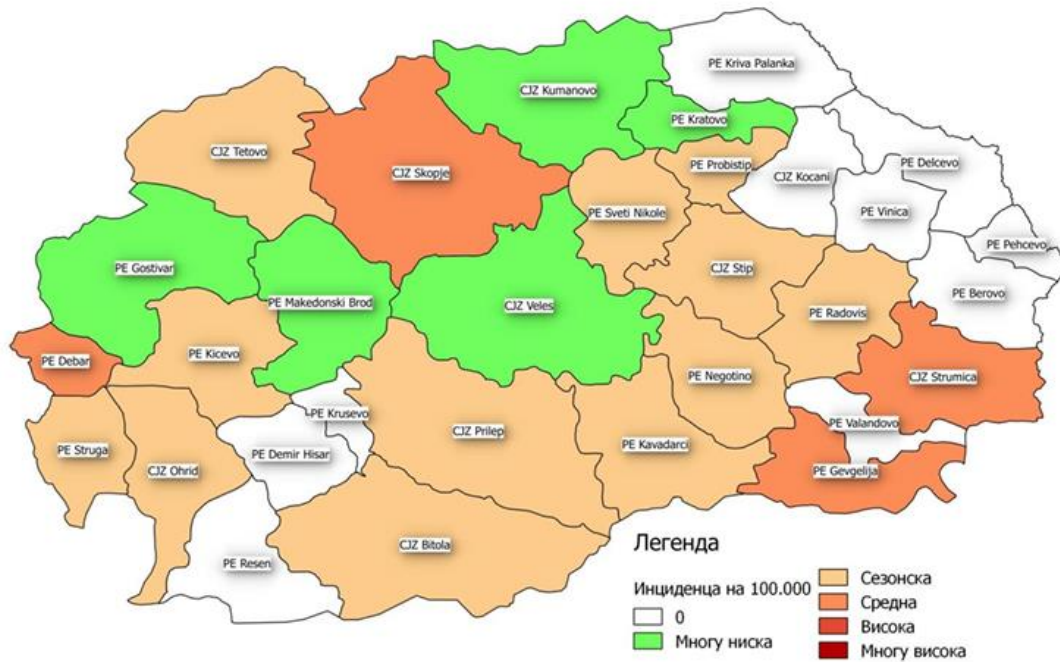
The highest incidence rate (169.9 per 100,000 population) was recorded among children aged 0–4 years.

Reported cases originated from 21 Centers for Public Health / Regional Units (CPH/RU): Skopje – 669, Strumica – 81, Prilep – 61, Tetovo – 50, Gevgelija and Ohrid – 37 each. In Bitola, Kumanovo, Debar, Struga, Kichevo, Shtip, Kavadarci, Negotino, Probishtip, Gostivar, Radovish, Sveti Nikole, Veles, Kratovo, and Makedonski Brod, the number of reported cases was below 30.

In Krushevo, Valandovo, Kriva Palanka, Demir Hisar, Berovo, Kochani, Resen, Vinica, Delchevo, and Pehchevo, no cases of influenza or influenza-like illness were reported.

In four CPH/RUs, moderate activity was recorded, seasonal activity was observed in 12 CPH/RUs, while very low influenza activity was reported in five units. (Cartogram 1).

Cartogram 1. Influenza activity level according to incidence per 100,000 inhabitants, week 8, 2026.



Virological Surveillance

During the eighth reporting week of 2026, the virology laboratory of the Institute of Public Health received 56 samples from routine and SARI surveillance for laboratory testing, simultaneously tested for Influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and/or RSV.

From the total tested samples: 2 positive influenza cases were detected of which 1 case – Influenza A(H1)pdm09 and 1 case – Influenza A(H3)

Additionally are detected: 21 cases of RSV (13 RSV type B, 6 RSV type A, 2 RSV not subtyped and 4 positive results for SARS-CoV-2

Epidemiological Surveillance – Cumulative Data

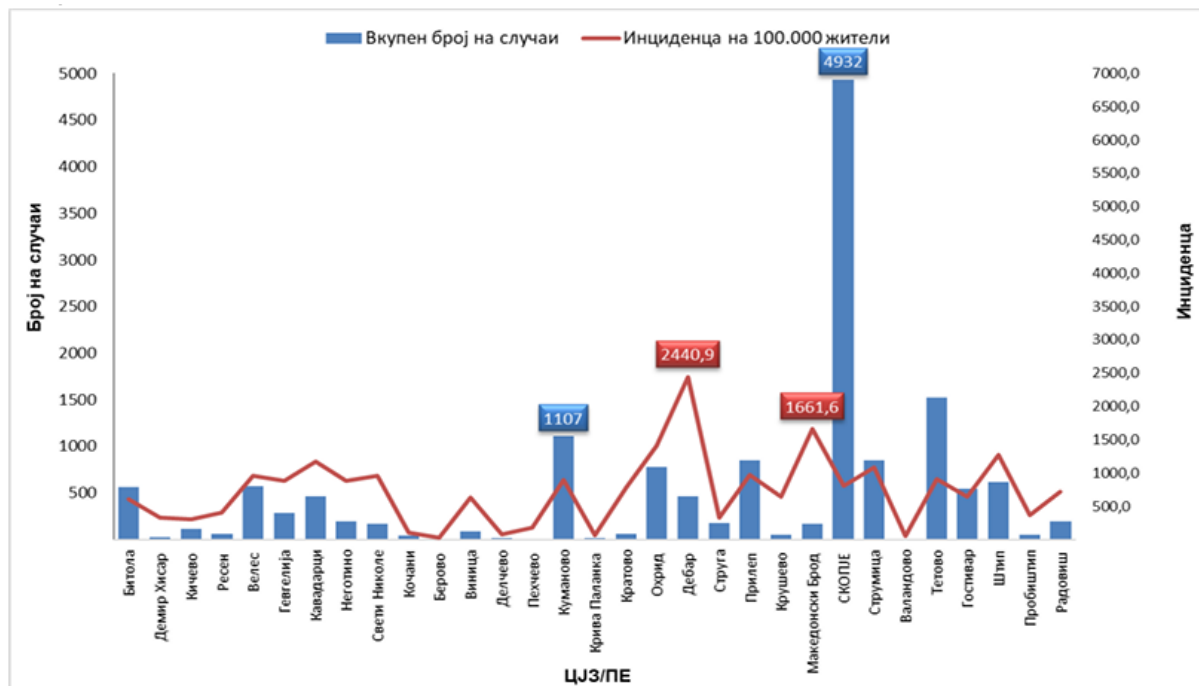
In the 2025/2026 influenza season, the total number of influenza / influenza-like illness cases is 14,984 (I = 815.8/100,000).

Compared with the same period of the previous season (n = 17,375), the number of reported cases decreased by 13.8%. Compared with the model from the last 15 seasons (n = 18,054), there is a 17.0% decrease.

Cumulatively, cases have been reported from all Centers for Public Health / Regional Units. The largest number of cases (n = 4,932) was registered in Skopje. The highest cumulative incidence (I = 2,440.9/100,000) was registered in Debar (n = 467). (Table 1 in the Appendix)

Regarding age distribution, the largest number of cases is reported in the 15–64 age group – 8,664 cases (57.8%). The highest incidence (1,823.4/100,000) was registered in the 0–4 age group, followed by children aged 5–14 years (1,220.5/100,000). (Graph 2, Table 1 in the Appendix)

Graph 2. Distribution of seasonal influenza cases by Centers for Public Health / Regional Units and incidence per 100,000 inhabitants, season 2025/2026.



Distribution of seasonal Influenza / Influenza-like illness cases by month (Table 1 in the Appendix)

- October – 338 cases or 2.3%
- November – 438 cases or 2.9%
- December – 1,324 cases or 8.8%
- January – 9,315 cases or 62.2%
- February – 3,569 cases or 23.8%

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

Virological Surveillance – Cumulative Data

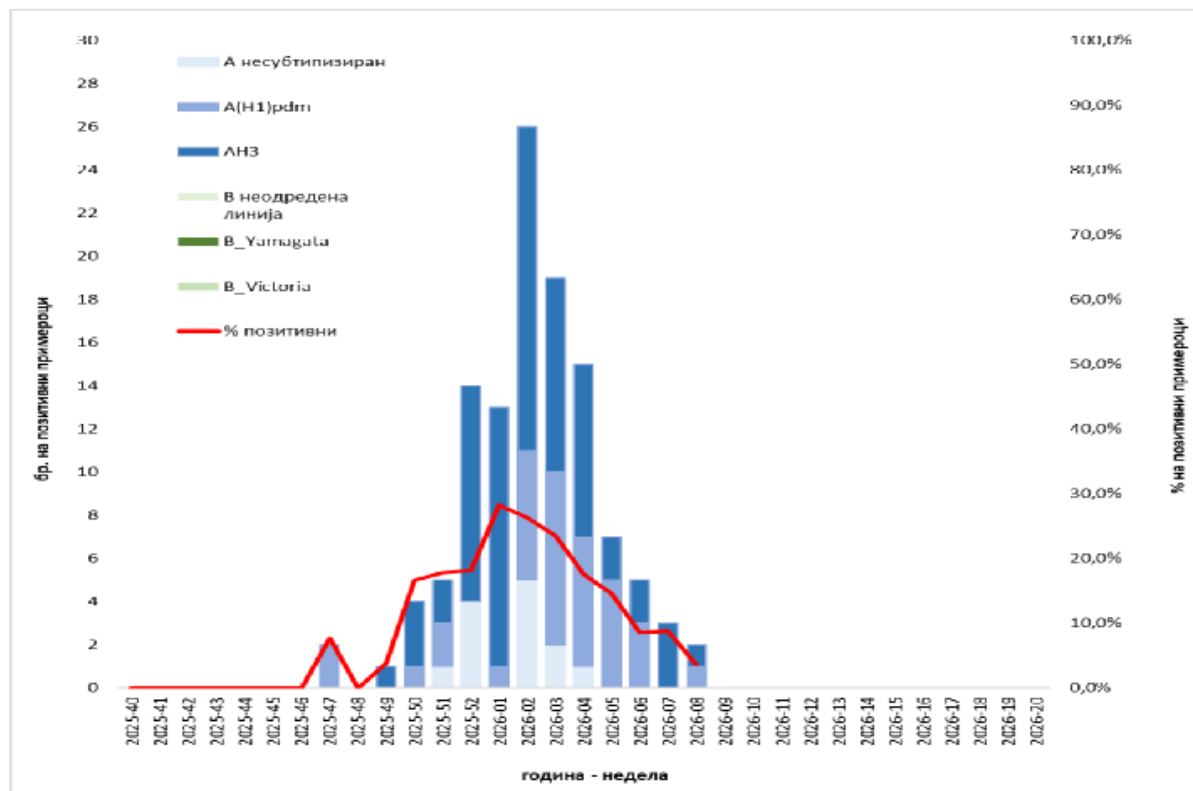
Since the beginning of the 2025/2026 season, up to week 8/2026, the Virology Laboratory at the Institute of Public Health has received 877 samples from routine and sentinel SARI surveillance. All received samples were tested for the presence of influenza virus, SARS-CoV-2 and/or RSV.

116 positive influenza cases were detected: Influenza A – 116, Influenza A(H1)pdm09 – 35 (30.2%), Influenza A(H3) – 68 (58.6%), Influenza A – not subtyped – 13 (11.2%), Influenza B – 0

Additionally, 13 positive cases of SARS-CoV-2 were registered. 80 positive cases of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) were registered (RSV not subtyped – 4, RSV-A – 14, RSV-B – 62).

Furthermore, five 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 Commentary

During the eighth week of 2026, the trend of decreasing numbers of cases and incidence of influenza-like illnesses at the weekly level continues. The reported weekly incidence remains within the low activity range.

Results obtained from virological influenza surveillance indicate regional geographical activity of the influenza virus. The positivity rate remains below the 10% threshold.

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

General Prevention Measures

Source: <https://sezonskigrip.mk/>

General protective measures against influenza are aimed at all acute respiratory diseases and may be very useful, especially if applied throughout the winter period:

- Avoid gatherings and staying in rooms with many people, especially close contact with people who are sick or suspected to be sick (coughing, sneezing, fever).

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or disinfectant.
- Heat indoor spaces and ventilate them frequently.
- Dress warmly in layers and take warm baths.
- Drink warm beverages (tea and soups), fresh fruit juices, and water with lemon.
- Consume fresh foods rich in vitamins and minerals, particularly fruit and vegetables essential for the body. Foods rich in vitamin C (such as lemons and oranges) are especially recommended. If fresh foods are not always available, multivitamin drinks or supplements may also be used.
- Maintain healthy lifestyle habits, including good sleep and rest, healthy nutrition, physical and mental activity, and reduced stress.

A strong immune system will help you stay healthy or cope more easily with influenza and influenza-like illnesses. However, even if you are perfectly healthy and have a strong immune system, you may still become infected with influenza or influenza-like illness.

What to Do if You Get the Flu

Follow these recommendations:

- Stay at home and do not go to work, school, or crowded places.
- Rest and drink plenty of fluids, and eat light meals.
- Avoid close contact with household members and do not receive visitors while you are sick.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and discard it afterward.
- Wear a protective mask when interacting with family members at home.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with warm water and soap.
- Use alcohol-based wipes or hand disinfectants.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands.
- Ventilate the room frequently where you stay while sick.
- Keep your surroundings clean by disinfecting objects and surfaces.
- If you are over 65 years old, have chronic diseases, or if symptoms worsen or persist for several days, seek medical attention.

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 people belonging to risk groups according to WHO recommendations:

- Older adults (over 65 years)
- Children aged 6–59 months
- People older than 6 months with chronic diseases
- Pregnant women
- Healthcare workers

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

Vaccination started on 16 October 2025 and is conducted in Public Health Centers and their regional units and/or Health Centers. Vaccination of healthcare workers in Skopje is conducted at the Institute of Public Health.

According to the Electronic Health Administration, 77,279 people from risk groups have been vaccinated with free vaccines since the beginning of the vaccination campaign.

Additionally, 2,400 doses of commercial vaccines were procured by the Public Health Centers for the rest of the population not belonging to priority groups. These vaccines are available for a fee and administered at Public Health Centers and their regional units.

According to the same data source, 1,839 people were vaccinated with commercial vaccines.

By the eighth week, a total of 79,118 people in North Macedonia had been vaccinated with free or commercial influenza vaccines.

European Region

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

According to the ERVISS report published for week 7 of 2026 on influenza virus activity across the WHO European Region:

- Influenza-like illness (ILI) and/or acute respiratory infection (ARI) rates are above baseline levels in 19 of 31 countries and areas reporting data this week.
- Regional influenza indicators in both primary and secondary healthcare continue to decline from elevated levels earlier in the season, with clear decreases observed in nearly all countries. Influenza A(H3) remains the dominant circulating virus across the region, and adults aged 65 years or older account for the highest proportion of severe influenza presentations.
- Regional indicators for SARS-CoV-2 activity remain at baseline levels.
- RSV activity indicators are stabilizing at elevated levels in primary healthcare settings, but continue to increase in secondary healthcare facilities. There is significant variability between countries regarding the stages of their seasonal RSV epidemics. The disease burden and positivity rate remain highest among children under 5 years of age.