

INFLUENZA SITUATION – SEASON 2025/2026 (Week 11, up to 15.03.2026)

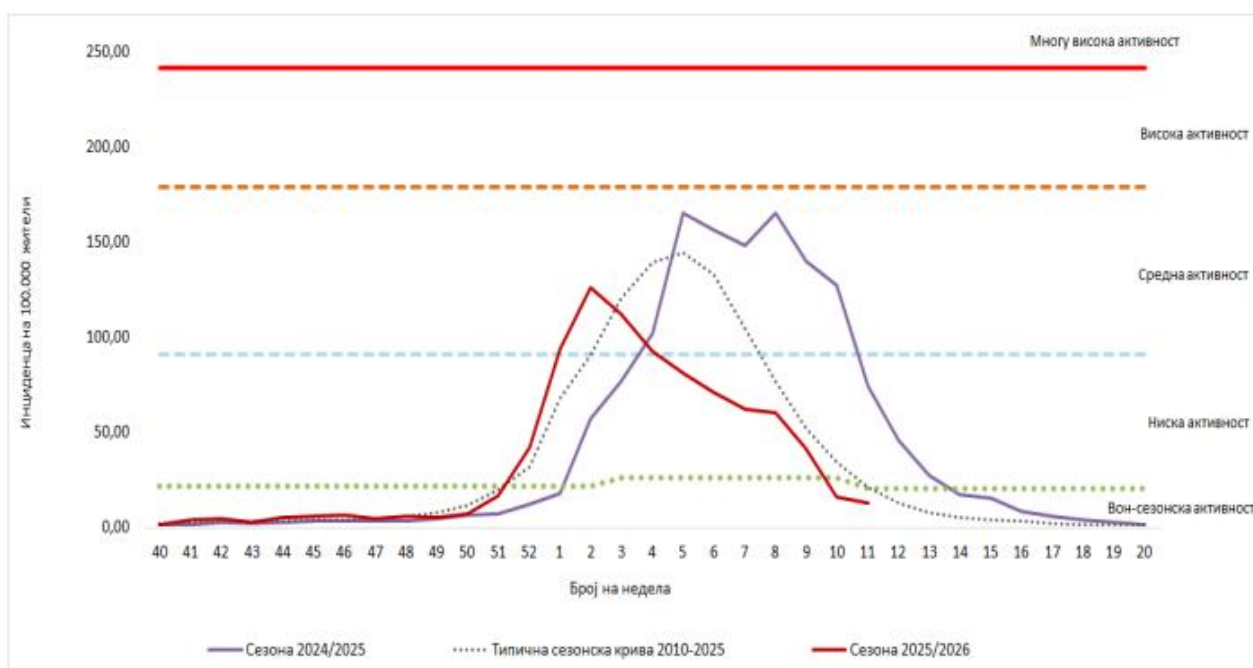
Weekly data

During the 11th week of 2026 (09–15 March 2026), 242 cases of reported influenza / influenza-like illness were recorded in North Macedonia ($I=13.2/100,000$), which is 18.2% lower compared to the previous week ($n=296$).

Compared to week 11 of last season ($n=1,370$), the number of reported cases this week decreased by 82.3%, and compared to the number for week 11 of the typical epidemic curve (modeled from the last 15 seasons) ($n=395$), it decreased by 38.7%. (Chart 1)

During week 11, the registered incidence remains within out-of-season 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

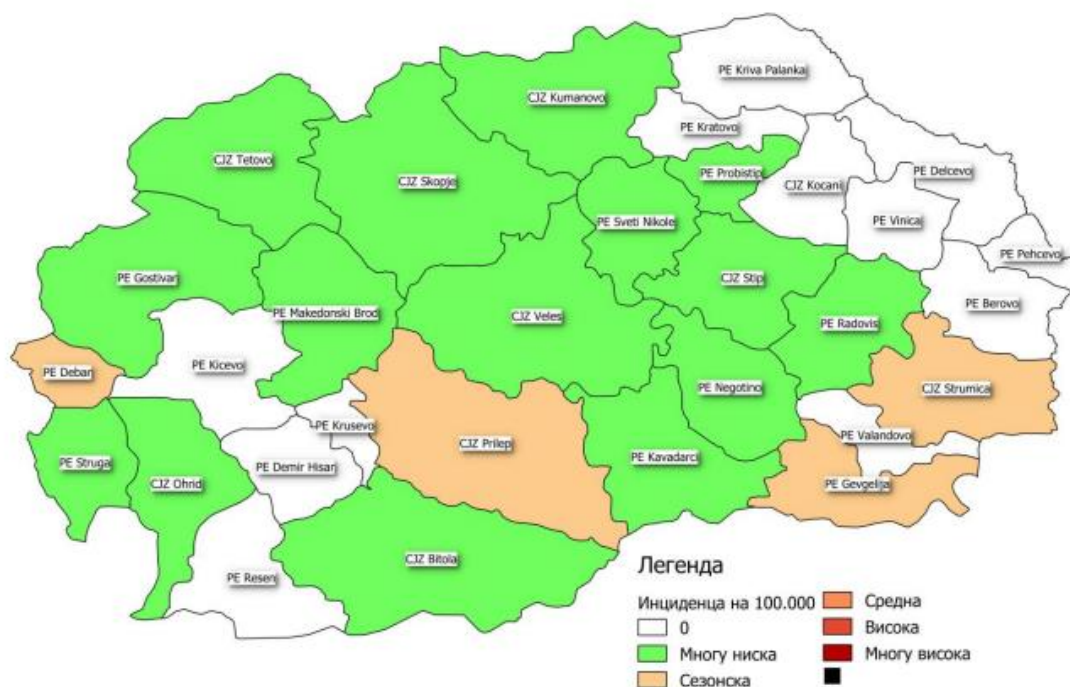


By age distribution, 160 cases were reported among individuals aged 15–64 years, 20 cases among children aged 5–14 years, 22 cases among children aged 0–4 years, and 40 cases among individuals over 65 years. The highest incidence (22.8/100,000) was observed in children aged 0–4 years.

Cases were reported from 19 Centers for Public Health / Regional units: Prilep – 61, Gevgelija – 35, while in Strumica, Tetovo, Skopje, Debar, Kumanovo, Shtip, Gostivar, Ohrid, Radovich, Struga, Veles, Bitola, Sveti Nikole, Makedonski Brod, Kavadarci, Negotino, and Probistip, the number of cases was fewer than 30. In Demir Hisar, Kichevo, Resen, Kochani, Berovo, Vinica, Delchevo, Pehchevo, Kriva Palanka, Kratovo, Krushevo, and Valandovo, no cases of influenza or influenza-like illness were reported.

Seasonal activity was recorded in 4 CPH/Regional units, while very low influenza virus activity was observed in 15 units. (Map 1)

Map 1. Level of influenza activity according to incidence per 100,000 population, week 11, 2026



VIROLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE

During the 11th reporting week of 2026, 52 samples from routine and SARI surveillance were received at the virology laboratory of the Institute of Public Health and were simultaneously tested for Influenza, SARS-CoV-2, and/or RSV.

Out of the total tested samples, 4 positive influenza cases were detected – two cases of Influenza A(H1)pdm09, one case of Influenza A(H3), and one case of untyped Influenza A.

Additionally, 12 cases of RSV were identified (6 RSV type B and 6 RSV type A). No positive SARS-CoV-2 cases were detected during this week.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE – Cumulative Data

In the 2025/2026 season, the total number of influenza / influenza-like illness cases amounted to 16,289 ($I=886.9/100,000$).

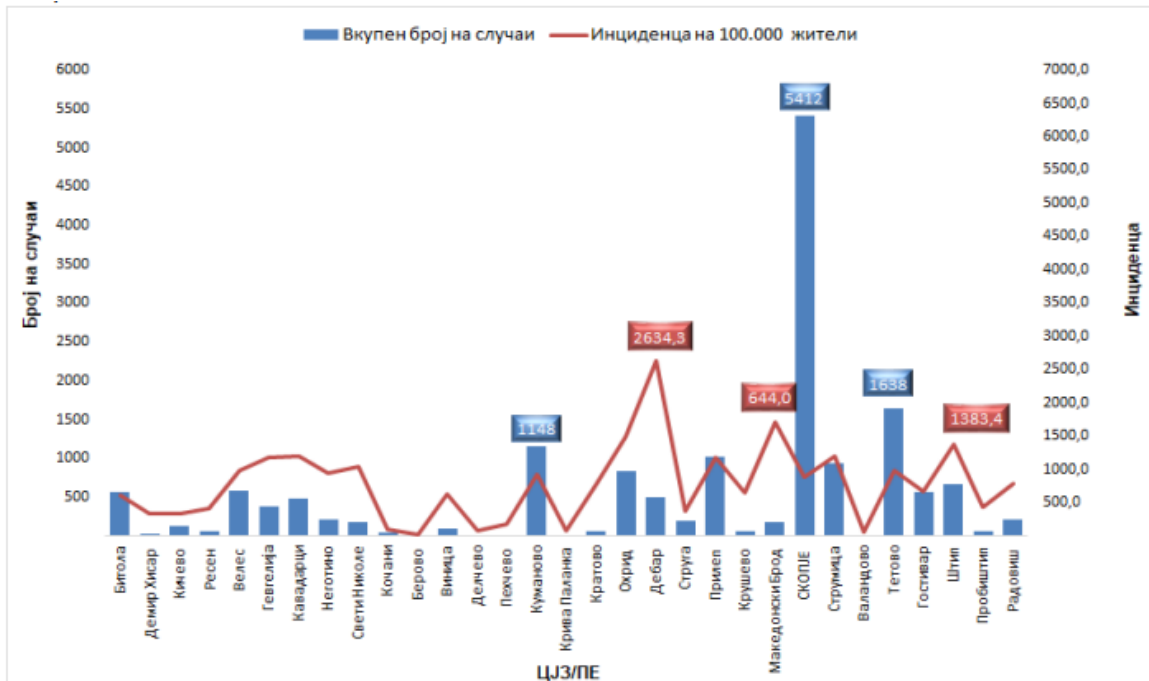
Compared to the same period last season ($n=23,661$), the number of reported cases decreased by 31.2%, and compared to the model from the last 15 seasons ($n=20,044$), a decrease of 18.7% was recorded.

Cumulatively, cases were reported from all Centers for Public Health / regional units. The highest number of cases ($n=5,412$) was recorded in the territory of Skopje, while the highest cumulative incidence ($I=2,634.3/100,000$) was observed in the territory of Debar ($n=504$). (Table 1 in Annex)

Regarding the distribution of cases by age group, the largest number of cases was reported in the age group comprising the majority of the population (15–64 years) – 9,432 cases (57.9%), while the highest

incidence (1,985.1/100,000) was recorded in the 0–4 years and 5–14 years age groups (1,301.1/100,000). (Chart 2, Table 1 in Annex)

Chart 2. Distribution of seasonal influenza cases by Centers for Public Health / regional units and incidence per 100,000 population, season 2025/2026



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

- October – 338 cases (2.1%)
- November – 438 cases (2.7%)
- December – 1,324 cases (8.1%)
- January – 9,315 cases (57.2%)
- February – 4,336 cases (26.6%)
- March – 538 cases (3.3%)

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

VIROLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE – Cumulative Data

From the beginning of the 2025/2026 season up to week 11/2026, 1,040 samples from routine and sentinel SARI surveillance were received at the virology laboratory of the Institute of Public Health of North Macedonia. All samples were tested for the presence of influenza virus, SARS-CoV-2, and/or RSV.

A total of 125 positive influenza cases were detected:

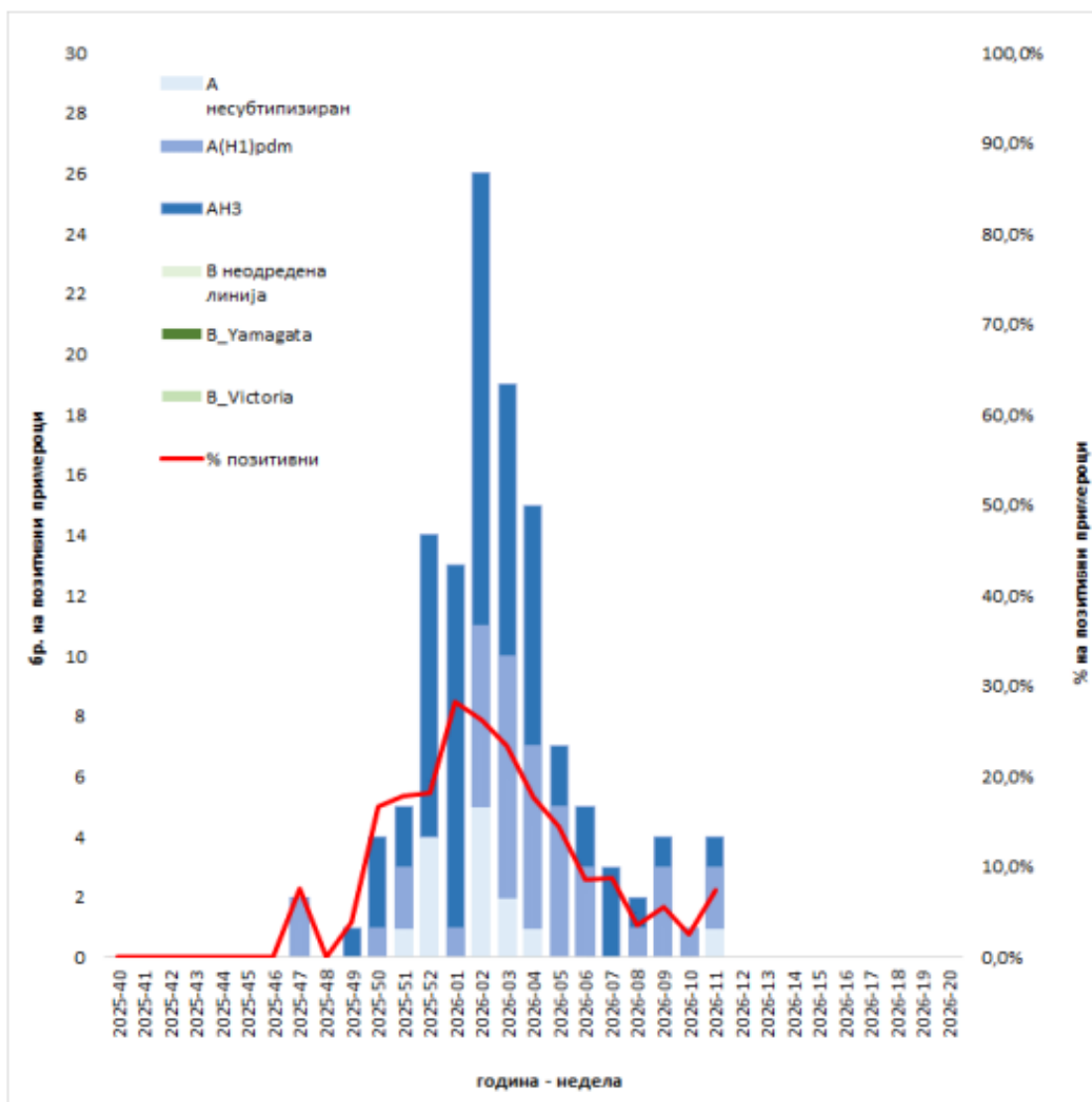
- Influenza A – 125
 - Influenza A(H1)pdm09 – 41 (32.8%)
 - Influenza A(H3) – 70 (56.0%)

- Influenza A – unsubtype – 14 (11.2%)
- Influenza B – 0

Additionally, 25 positive SARS-CoV-2 cases were registered.

A total of 122 positive cases of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) were detected (RSV unsubtype – 4, RSV-A – 29, RSV-B – 89). Moreover, 6 other respiratory viruses were identified among the tested samples.

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



EPIDEMIOLOGICAL COMMENT

During the 11th week of 2026, the trend of decreasing cases and incidence of influenza-like illness on a weekly basis continued. The reported weekly incidence remains within out-of-season activity. Results

from virological surveillance of influenza show sporadic geographic activity of the influenza virus, with the positivity rate below 10%.

According to these data, influenza virus intensity in North Macedonia is low.

GENERAL PREVENTIVE MEASURES

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

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

- Avoid gatherings and staying in crowded indoor spaces, especially close contact with people who are sick or showing symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, or fever.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use disinfectant.
- Keep indoor spaces warm and ventilate them regularly.
- Wear warm, layered clothing and take warm baths.
- Drink warm beverages (teas and soups), fresh fruit juices, and water with lemon.
- Consume fresh products rich in vitamins and minerals, especially fruits and vegetables. Vitamin C-rich foods (lemons, oranges) are particularly recommended. If fresh produce is not available, multivitamin drinks or supplements can be used.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle including adequate sleep and rest, balanced nutrition, physical and mental activity, and stress reduction.

A strong immune system helps to stay healthy or cope more easily with influenza and influenza-like illnesses. However, even healthy individuals with strong immunity can still contract influenza or similar illnesses.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET SICK WITH INFLUENZA

Follow these recommendations:

- Stay at home; avoid work, school, or crowded places.
- Rest and consume plenty of fluids and light meals.
- Avoid close contact with household members and do not receive visitors while ill.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing; dispose of tissues in a waste bin.
- Wear a protective mask when interacting with household members or when coughing/sneezing.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with warm water and soap.
- Use alcohol-based wipes or hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands.
- Ventilate the room frequently while you are sick.
- Keep your environment clean, disinfect surfaces and objects regularly.
- Seek medical care if you are over 65, have chronic conditions, or if symptoms worsen or persist for several days.

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, particularly for individuals in so-called risk groups (according to WHO recommendations):

- Older adults (over 65 years)
- Children aged 6–59 months
- Individuals older than 6 months with chronic diseases
- Pregnant women
- Healthcare workers
- For the 2025/2026 season, the Ministry of Health provided 80,000 doses of free quadrivalent vaccine for priority population groups. Vaccination began on 16 October 2025 and is conducted in Centers for Public Health (CPH) with their regional units and/or Health Centers. Vaccination for healthcare workers in Skopje is carried out at the Institute of Public Health.
- According to the data from the Electronic Health Administration, by the time of this report, 77,280 individuals from risk groups were vaccinated with free vaccines.
- An additional 2,400 doses of commercial vaccine were procured by the Centers for Public Health for the rest of the population not included in the risk groups. These vaccines are available for a fee and vaccination is carried out at CPHs and their regional units. 1,839 individuals have been vaccinated with commercial vaccines.
- By week 8, a total of 79,119 individuals in North Macedonia received either free or commercial influenza vaccination.

EUROPEAN REGION

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

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

- Rates of influenza-like illness (ILI) and/or acute respiratory infection (ARI) were above baseline levels in 9 of 31 reporting countries and areas.
- Influenza virus circulation continues to decline and is now at low to moderate levels across the region. Subtyping shows that influenza A(H1) and A(H3) subtypes are co-dominant, though variations exist between countries and areas.
- Regional indicators for SARS-CoV-2 activity remained at baseline levels.
- Regional indicators for RSV activity and severity increased but appear to have peaked, although RSV is still rising in several countries. Disease burden and positivity rates remain highest among children under 5 years of age.