

INFLUENZA SITUATION – SEASON 2025/2026 (Week 12, up to 22.03.2026)

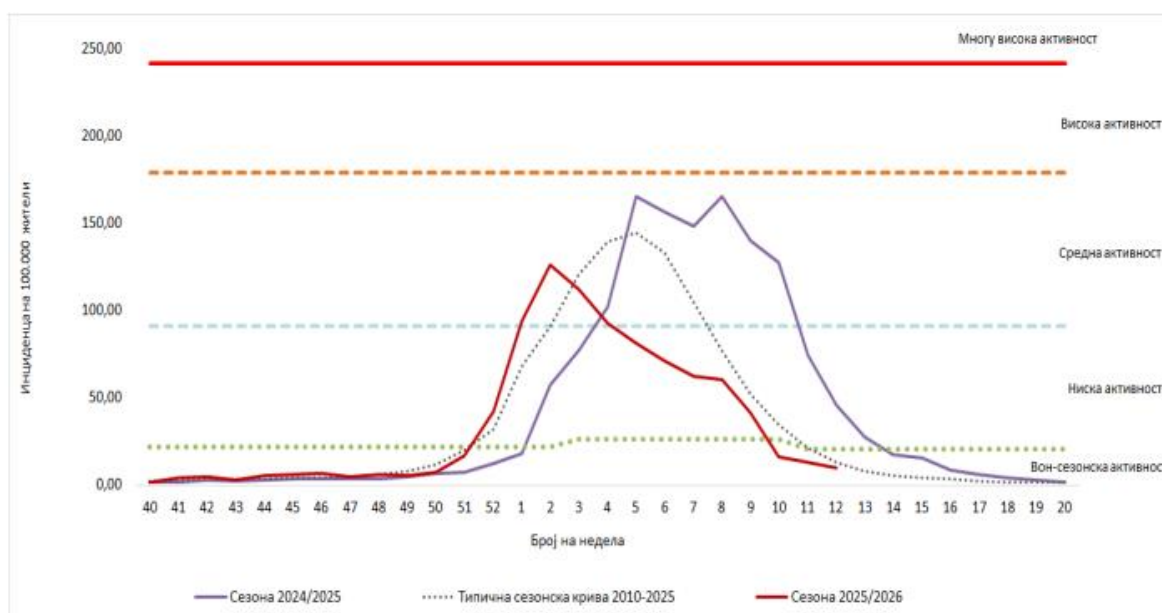
Weekly data

During the twelfth week of 2026 (16–22.03.2026), in Macedonia, 181 cases ($I = 9.8/100,000$) of grouped reports of patients with influenza/influenza-like illnesses were reported, which is 25.2% less compared to the previous week ($n = 242$).

The number of reported cases this week, compared to the twelfth week of the previous season ($n = 839$), has decreased by 78.4%, and compared to the number for the twelfth week of the typical epidemic curve (modeled from the last 15 seasons) ($n = 239$), it has decreased by 24.2% (Graph 1).

During week 12, the recorded incidence is 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.

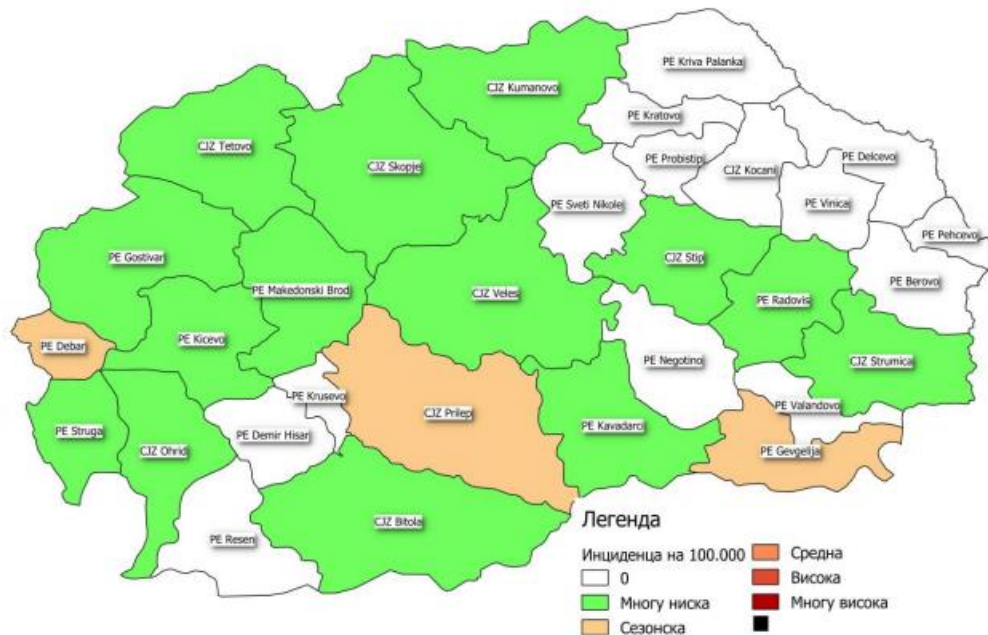


Regarding age distribution, 114 cases are among persons aged 15–64 years, 22 are children aged 5–14 years, 19 are children aged 0–4 years, and 26 are persons over 65 years of age. The highest incidence ($19.7/100,000$) is registered among children aged 0–4 years.

The reported cases come from 17 Centers for Public Health/regional units: Prilep – 38, Gevgelija – 34, while in Tetovo, Skopje, Strumica, Kichevo, Shtip, Ohrid, Bitola, Debar, Kavadarci, Struga, Gostivar, Kumanovo, Makedonski Brod, Radovich, and Veles, the number of cases is below 30. In Demir Hisar, Resen, Negotino, Sveti Nikole, Kochani, Berovo, Vinica, Delchevo, Pehchevo, Kriva Palanka, Kratovo, Krushevo, Valandovo, and Probishtip, no cases of influenza or influenza-like illness have been reported.

In 3 Centers for Public Health/regional units, seasonal activity is recorded, while in 14 units very low influenza virus activity is recorded (Map 1).

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



VIROLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE

During the twelfth reporting week of 2026, 50 samples 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.

Out of the total tested samples, no positive influenza cases were detected.

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

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE – Cumulative Data

In the 2025/2026 season, the total number of influenza/influenza-like illness cases is 16,470 ($I = 896.7/100,000$).

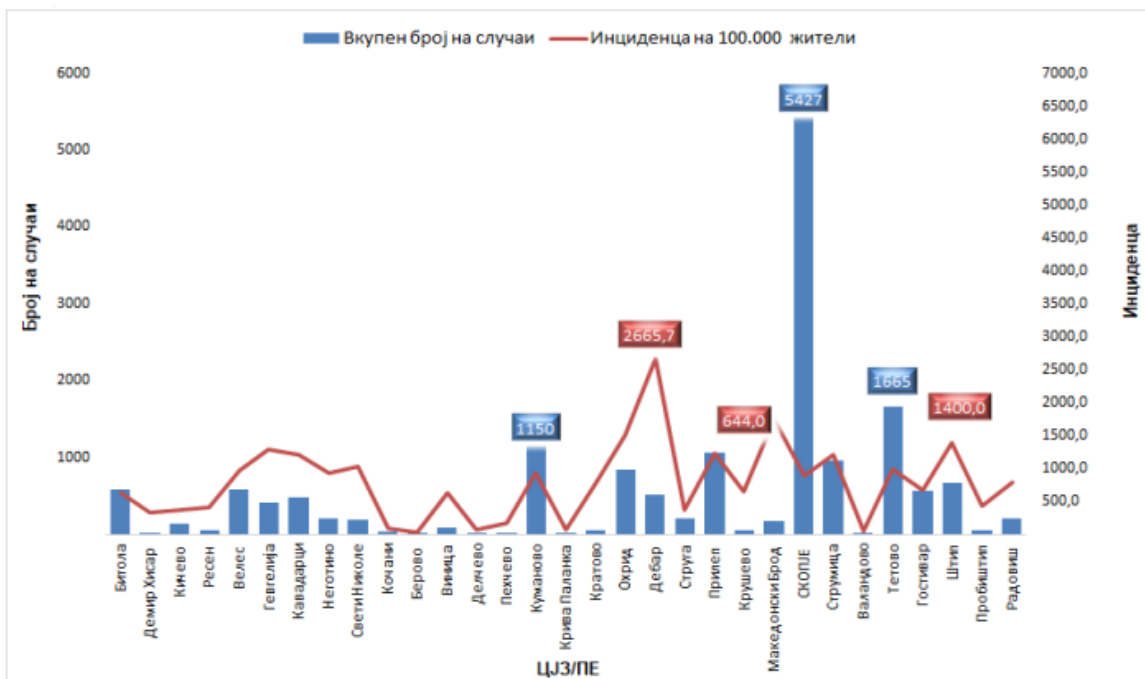
Compared to the same period of the previous season ($n = 24,500$), the number of reported cases has decreased by 32.8%, and compared to the model from the last 15 seasons ($n = 20,283$), a decrease of 18.8% is recorded.

Cumulatively, cases have been reported from all Centers for public health/regional units. The highest number of cases ($n = 5,427$) is registered in the territory of Skopje, while the highest cumulative incidence ($I = 2,665.7/100,000$) is registered in the territory of Debar ($n = 510$) (Table 1 in Appendix).

Regarding the distribution of cases by age groups, the largest number of cases is reported in the age group covering the majority of the population (15–64 years) – 9,546 cases (58.0%), while the highest incidence

(2,004.7/100,000) is registered in the 0–4 age group, and 1,311.3/100,000 in the 5–14 age group (Graph 2, Table 1 in 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 Appendix):

- October – 338 cases or 2.1%
- November – 438 cases or 2.7%
- December – 1,324 cases or 8.0%
- January – 9,315 cases or 56.6%
- February – 4,336 cases or 26.3%
- March – 719 cases or 4.4%

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 12/2026, 1,090 samples from routine and sentinel SARI surveillance have been received at the virology laboratory of the Institute of Public Health of the Republic of North Macedonia. All received 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%)

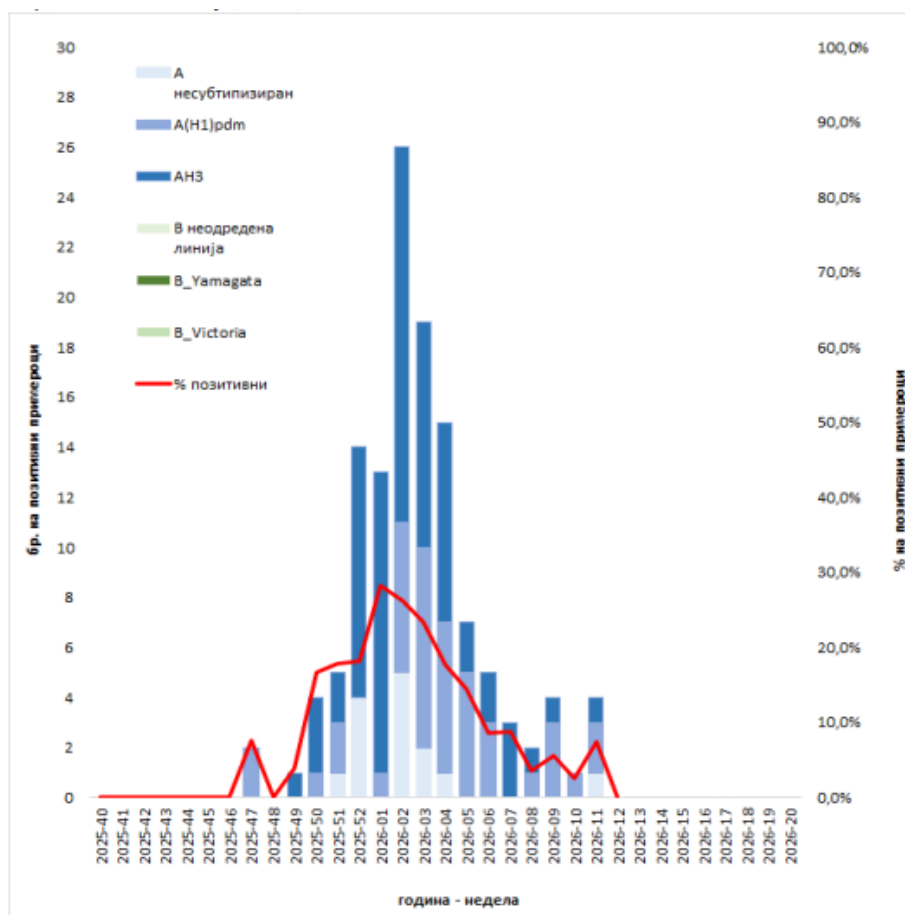
- Influenza A – not subtyped – 14 (11.2%)
- Influenza B – 0

A total of 25 positive SARS-CoV-2 cases were recorded.

A total of 134 positive cases of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) were recorded (RSV not subtyped – 4, RSV-A – 35, and RSV-B – 95).

Additionally, 5 other respiratory viruses were detected in the tested samples.

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



EPIDEMIOLOGICAL COMMENT

During the twelfth week of 2026, the downward trend in the number of cases and the incidence of influenza-like illnesses at the weekly level continues. The reported weekly incidence is within off-season activity levels. The results obtained from virological influenza surveillance indicate sporadic geographic activity of the influenza virus. The positivity rate is below the 10% threshold.

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

GENERAL PREVENTIVE MEASURES

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

General protective measures against influenza apply to all acute respiratory illnesses and can be highly beneficial, especially if practiced throughout the entire winter period:

- Avoid gatherings and staying in crowded indoor spaces, especially avoid close contact with people who are ill or suspected to be ill (coughing, sneezing, fever).
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use a disinfectant.
- Keep indoor spaces warm and ventilate them frequently.
- Dress warmly in layers; warm baths are recommended.
- Drink warm beverages (teas and soups), fresh fruit juices, and water with lemon.
- Consume fresh foods rich in vitamins and minerals, especially fruits and vegetables. Foods rich in vitamin C (such as citrus fruits—lemons and oranges) are particularly recommended. If fresh food is not always available, multivitamin drinks and supplements may be used.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle and habits, including good sleep and rest, healthy nutrition, physical and mental activity, and stress reduction.

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 can still get the flu or a flu-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 consume plenty of fluids and light food.
- 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 it properly after use.
- Wear a protective mask when in contact with household members, especially if coughing or sneezing.
- Practice frequent and thorough handwashing with warm water and soap.
- Use wet wipes containing alcohol or hand disinfectants.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands.
- Ventilate the room where you are staying frequently while sick.
- Keep your surroundings clean—objects and surfaces should be regularly disinfected.
- If you are over 65 years old, have chronic illnesses, or if symptoms worsen or last 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 individuals belonging to the 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. Vaccination began on 16.10.2025 and is carried out in the Centers for Public Health (CPH) with their regional units and/or Health Centers. Vaccination of healthcare workers in Skopje is conducted at the Institute of Public Health.

According to data from the Administration for Electronic Health, from the start of vaccination until the closing of this report, a total of 77,280 individuals from risk categories have been vaccinated with free vaccines.

- An additional 2,400 doses of commercial vaccines have been procured by the Centers for Public Health for the rest of the population not included in the above groups. These can be obtained for a certain fee, and vaccination is carried out at the Centers for Public Health with their regional units.

According to the Administration for Electronic Health, a total of 1,841 individuals have been vaccinated with commercial vaccines.

As of the twelfth week, a total of 79,121 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 11 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 3 out of 25 countries and areas in the WHO European Region reporting data this week.
- Influenza virus circulation continues to decline, and the positivity rate in sentinel surveillance in primary healthcare is now below the regional seasonal epidemic threshold of 10%. Influenza A subtypes H1 and H3 are co-dominant, although there are variations between countries and areas.
- Regional indicators for SARS-CoV-2 activity have remained at baseline levels.
- Regional indicators for RSV activity and severity remain high and close to the peak from 2–3 weeks ago, and in several countries they are still increasing. The disease burden and positivity rate remain highest among children under 5 years of age.