

INFLUENZA SITUATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA 2025/2026 SEASON

(Week 40, up to 05.10.2025)

With the start of week 40 of 2025, weekly monitoring of influenza/influenza-like illnesses (ILI) begins. According to legal regulations, influenza reporting is conducted weekly from week 40 of the current year to week 20 of the following year, by age groups, in the Aggregate Report of influenza cases and deaths.

WEEKLY DATA

Epidemiological Surveillance

During week 40 of 2025 (29.09–05.10.2025), in the Republic of North Macedonia, 26 cases (I=1.4/100,000 population) of influenza/ILI were reported.

For comparison:

- Week 40 of the previous season: 25 cases
- Model for the last 14 seasons (n=37): 29.9% decrease

These are the first reported cases of the new season, distributed by city as follows: Gostivar – 11, Strumica – 7, Kumanovo – 5, Tetovo – 2, Kavadarci – 1

By age group: 15–64 years: 20 cases, over 65 years: 6 cases

The reported incidence is below the weekly threshold for seasonal influenza activity (I=22.03/100,000), meaning the threshold for entry into the influenza season has not yet been reached.

Virological Surveillance

During week 40, 16 samples from routine surveillance were received at the virology laboratory of the Institute of Public Health of the Republic of North Macedonia for laboratory testing, tested in parallel for Influenza, SARS-CoV-2, and/or RSV.

No positive influenza samples were detected.

Additionally, sequencing was conducted last week on:

- 15 SARS-CoV-2 samples received from July–September 2025
- 38 RSV samples from SARI patients from the 2024–2025 season
- 6 Influenza samples from SARI patients from the 2024–2025 season

SARS-CoV-2

Currently, various sublineages of the XFG variant of SARS-CoV-2, commonly known as “Stratus,” are circulating in North Macedonia. This variant is responsible for increases in COVID-19 cases globally and was detected in 14 of 15 analyzed samples. Sample distribution by city: Skopje (9), Gostivar, Tetovo, Veles, Kocani, Prilep, and Krushevo (1 each).

RSV

- 25 RSV A samples: most belonged to clade A.D.1.5
- 13 RSV B samples: all belonged to lineage B.D.E.1

Influenza

Of the six influenza samples sequenced:

- 4 Influenza A H1N1pdm (HA clade 6B.1A.5a.2a)
- 1 Influenza A H3N2 (HA clade 3C.2a1b.2a.2a.3a.1)
- 1 Influenza B Victoria (HA clade V1A.3a.2)

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL COMMENT

The number of influenza-like illnesses remains at interseasonal levels, typical for this period of the year.

GENERAL PREVENTIVE MEASURES

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

General protective measures against influenza are useful for all acute respiratory infections, especially if applied throughout the winter:

- Avoid gatherings and close contact with sick or potentially sick people (coughing, sneezing, fever).
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or disinfectant.
- Heat indoor spaces adequately and ventilate often.
- Dress warmly in layers and take warm baths.
- Drink warm beverages (tea, soups), fresh juices, lemon water.
- Consume fresh, vitamin- and mineral-rich foods, especially fruits and vegetables. Vitamin C-rich foods are recommended; multivitamins may be used if fresh foods are unavailable.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle: sleep, rest, nutritious diet, physical and mental activity, and stress reduction.

Even healthy individuals with strong immunity can contract influenza or ILI.

Recommendations if you get Influenza

- Stay home and avoid work, school, and crowded places.
- Rest and drink fluids; eat light meals.
- Avoid close contact with household members; no visitors while ill.
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing; dispose of tissues properly.
- Wear a protective mask when in contact with household members.
- Wash hands frequently with warm water and soap; use alcohol-based wipes or disinfectants.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Ventilate the room frequently.
- Keep surroundings clean (objects and surfaces).

- Persons over 65, with chronic conditions, or worsening/long-lasting symptoms should seek medical care.

INFLUENZA VACCINATION

Seasonal influenza vaccination is the most effective protection. Recommended for the entire population, especially risk groups (WHO recommendations):

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

For 2025/2026, the Ministry of Health secured 80,000 free quadrivalent vaccine doses for priority groups. Vaccination is conducted at Centers for Public Health, their regional units, and Health Centers. Healthcare worker vaccination is conducted at the Institute of Public Health. Appointments are made via www.vakcinacija.mk.

An additional 2,400 commercial doses are available for the general population for a fee at Centers for Public Health.

EUROPEAN REGION

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

According to the ERVISS report for week 39 of 2025:

- Influenza virus activity is at levels typical for this period.
- ILI/ARI rates were above baseline in 5 European Region countries.
- Influenza and RSV activity remain at interseasonal levels.
- SARS-CoV-2 activity varies across countries; positivity and detection rates are stable or decreasing. XFG remains the dominant SARS-CoV-2 variant in the region.

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