

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

(Week 41, up to 12.10.2025)

### **WEEKLY DATA**

#### **Epidemiological Surveillance**

During week 41 of 2025 (06–12.10.2025), in the Republic of North Macedonia, 79 cases ( $I=4.3/100,000$  population) of influenza/influenza-like illness (ILI) were reported.

For comparison, in week 41 of the previous season, 31 cases were registered (a 2.5-fold increase), while compared to the model for the last 15 seasons ( $n=47$ ), an increase of 67.9% was recorded.

Cases this week were registered in:

- Gostivar – 38
- Kumanovo – 18
- Makedonski Brod – 11
- Tetovo – 8
- Strumica – 2
- Negotino and Shtip – 1 each

By age group:

- 15–64 years: 62 cases
- Over 65 years: 14 cases
- 0–4 years: 2 cases
- 5–14 years: 1 case

The reported incidence remains 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 of reporting, 38 samples from routine and SARI 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.  
One positive SARS-CoV-2 result was registered.

### **EPIDEMIOLOGICAL COMMENT**

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

### **GENERAL PREVENTIVE MEASURES**

General protective measures against influenza apply to all acute respiratory infections and can be particularly useful if implemented throughout the entire winter period:

- Avoid gatherings and staying in crowded indoor spaces, especially close contact with people who are ill or suspected to be ill (coughing, sneezing, fever).
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or disinfectant.
- Heat indoor spaces adequately and ventilate frequently.
- Dress warmly in layers; take warm baths.
- Drink warm beverages (tea and soups), fresh fruit juices, lemon water.
- Consume fresh products rich in vitamins and minerals, especially fruits and vegetables. Vitamin C-rich foods (citrus fruits such as lemons and oranges) are particularly recommended. If fresh food is not always available, multivitamin drinks and supplements may be used.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle, including adequate 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 or influenza-like illness. However, even perfectly healthy individuals with strong immunity may still develop influenza or influenza-like illness.

### **If you get sick with influenza**

Follow these recommendations:

- Stay home and do not go to work, school, or crowded places.
- Rest and drink plenty of fluids; consume light meals.
- Avoid close contact with household members; do not receive visitors while ill.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of used tissues properly.
- Wear a protective mask when in contact with household members, especially when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with warm water and soap.
- Use alcohol-based wipes or hand disinfectants.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Ventilate the room where you stay frequently while ill.
- Keep your surroundings clean (objects and surfaces) using household hygiene products.
- If you are over 65 years of age, have chronic diseases, or if symptoms worsen or last several days, seek medical assistance.

### **INFLUENZA VACCINATION**

Seasonal influenza vaccination is the most effective protection against this disease.

The Institute of Public Health recommends vaccination for the entire population, especially for persons belonging to risk groups (according to WHO recommendations):

- People over 65 years
- Children aged 6–59 months

- Persons older than 6 months with chronic diseases
- Pregnant women
- Healthcare workers

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

Vaccination begins on 16.10.2025 and will be carried out at Centers for Public Health and their Regional Units and/or Health Centers. Vaccination of healthcare workers will be conducted at the Institute of Public Health. Appointments for free vaccination are scheduled via [www.vakcinacija.mk](http://www.vakcinacija.mk).

An additional 2,400 doses of commercial vaccines have been procured by the Centers for Public Health for the general population not included in the priority groups. These vaccines are available for a fee and will be administered at the Centers for Public Health and their Regional Units.

## **EUROPEAN REGION**

According to the ERVISS report published for week 40 of 2025, influenza virus activity is at levels typical for this time of year.

- Influenza-like illness (ILI) and/or acute respiratory infection (ARI) rates were above baseline levels in 7 of 27 reporting countries in the WHO European Region.
- Indicators for influenza and RSV activity remain at interseasonal levels throughout the Region.
- SARS-CoV-2 activity indicators vary across countries in the Region. At the regional level, overall positivity rates and detections in primary and secondary care surveillance are stable or decreasing. XFG remains the dominant SARS-CoV-2 variant in the Region.

Department of Epidemiology of Infectious Diseases  
Institute of Public Health