

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

(Week 42, up to 19.10.2025)

WEEKLY DATA

Epidemiological Surveillance

During week 42 of 2025 (13–19.10.2025), in the Republic of North Macedonia, 83 cases ($I=4.5/100,000$ population) of influenza/influenza-like illness (ILI) were reported, representing a 5.1% increase compared to the previous week ($n=79$).

For comparison, in week 42 of the previous season, 50 cases were registered (an increase of 66.0%), while compared to the model for the last 15 seasons ($n=53$), an increase of 55.5% was recorded.

Cases this week were registered in:

- Gostivar – 30
- Tetovo – 12
- Kumanovo – 11
- Prilep and Makedonski Brod – 9 each
- Strumica – 7
- Negotino – 3
- Radovish – 2

By age group:

- 15–64 years: 62 cases
- Over 65 years: 14 cases
- 5–14 years: 7 cases

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 42, 35 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.

CUMULATIVE DATA

Epidemiological Surveillance

In the 2025/2026 season, the total number of influenza/ILI cases is 188 (I=10.2/100,000).

Compared to the same period last season (n=106), the number of reported cases increased by 77.4%. Compared to the model of the last 14 seasons (n=138), an increase of 36.7% was recorded.

Cumulatively, cases were reported from 10 Centers for Public Health (CPH/Regional Units).

- The highest number of cases (n=79) was registered in Gostivar.
- The highest cumulative incidence (197.8/100,000) was registered in Makedonski Brod (n=20).

By age distribution:

- 15–64 years: 144 cases (76.6%)

So far this influenza season, two influenza-associated deaths have been registered.

Virological Surveillance

So far in the 2025/2026 season, 89 samples have been received for laboratory testing (Influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and/or RSV).

No positive influenza samples have been detected.
Two positive SARS-CoV-2 results have been 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 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) are particularly recommended. If fresh food is not always available, multivitamin preparations may be used.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle: adequate sleep and rest, healthy diet, physical and mental activity, and stress reduction.

A strong immune system will help you stay healthy or cope more easily with influenza, but even perfectly healthy individuals may develop influenza or influenza-like illness.

If you get sick with influenza

Follow these recommendations:

- Stay home; 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 it properly after use.
- Wear a protective mask when in contact with household members.
- 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.
- Keep your surroundings clean (objects and surfaces).
- If you are over 65, 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 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 for priority population groups.

Vaccination began on 16.10.2025 and is being conducted at Centers for Public Health and their regional units and/or Health Centers. Vaccination of healthcare workers is carried out at the Institute of Public Health. Appointments for free vaccination are scheduled via www.vakcinacija.mk.

According to the Administration for eHealth, as of the closing of this report, 13,273 persons from risk categories have been vaccinated with free vaccines.

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

EUROPEAN REGION

According to the ERVISS report published for week 41 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 in 7 of 30 reporting countries in the WHO European Region.
- Although influenza activity remains low at the regional level, some countries reported increased SARI rates or an increase in the number of hospitalized patients.
- 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.
- RSV activity indicators remain at interseasonal levels across the Region.

Department of Epidemiology of Infectious Diseases
Institute of Public Health