

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

(Week 43, up to 26.10.2025)

WEEKLY DATA

Epidemiological Surveillance

During week 43 of 2025 (20–26.10.2025), in the Republic of North Macedonia, 56 cases ($I=3.1/100,000$ population) of influenza/influenza-like illness (ILI) were reported, representing a 32.5% decrease compared to the previous week ($n=83$).

For comparison, in week 43 of the previous season, 42 cases were registered (an increase of 33.3%), while compared to the model for the last 15 seasons ($n=63$), a decrease of 10.5% was recorded.

Cases this week were registered in:

- Gostivar – 20
- Kumanovo – 15
- Prilep – 7
- Tetovo and Radovish – 5 each
- Strumica and Makedonski Brod – 2 each

By age group:

- 15–64 years: 48 cases
- Over 65 years: 5 cases
- 5–14 years: 2 cases
- 0–4 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 43, 21 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 244 ($I=13.3/100,000$).

Compared to the same period last season (n=148), the number of reported cases increased by 64.9%. Compared to the 15-season model (n=200), an increase of 21.9% was recorded.

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

- The highest number of cases (n=99) was registered in Gostivar.
- The highest cumulative incidence (217.6/100,000) was registered in Makedonski Brod (n=22).

By age distribution:

- 15–64 years: 192 cases (78.7%)

So far this influenza season, no influenza-associated deaths have been registered.

Virological Surveillance

So far in the 2025/2026 season, 110 samples have been received for laboratory testing (Influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and/or RSV).

No positive influenza samples have been detected.
Three positive SARS-CoV-2 results have been registered.

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) are particularly recommended. If fresh food is not always available, multivitamin drinks and supplements may be used.
- Practice a healthy lifestyle, including adequate sleep and rest, healthy nutrition, maintaining physical and mental activity, and reducing stress.

A strong immune system helps 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 food.
- 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.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL COMMENT

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

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, 31,289 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 42 of 2025:

- Influenza-like illness (ILI) and/or acute respiratory infection (ARI) rates were above baseline in 6 of 31 reporting countries in the WHO European Region.
- Influenza activity remains below the regional seasonal epidemic threshold but has increased above interseasonal levels in recent weeks, with clear increases observed in several countries in the western part of the Region.
- SARS-CoV-2 activity indicators are generally decreasing at the regional level, with variation between countries. XFG remains the dominant SARS-CoV-2 variant in the Region.
- RSV activity indicators remain at interseasonal levels across the Region.

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