

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

(Week 44, up to 02.11.2025)

WEEKLY DATA

Epidemiological Surveillance

During week 44 of 2025 (27.10–02.11.2025), in the Republic of North Macedonia, 94 cases ($I=5.1/100,000$ population) of influenza/influenza-like illness (ILI) were reported, representing a 67.9% increase compared to the previous week ($n=56$).

Compared to the same week of the previous season, when 47 cases were registered, this represents a twofold increase. Compared to the model for the last 15 seasons ($n=66$), an increase of 42.9% was recorded.

Cases this week were registered in:

- Gostivar – 27
- Kumanovo – 26
- Bitola – 7
- Shtip – 15
- Negotino and M. Brod – 4 each
- Tetovo and Strumica – 3 each
- Skopje and Radovish – 2 each
- Kavadarci – 1

By age group:

- 15–64 years: 70 cases
- Over 65 years: 17 cases
- 5–14 years: 6 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 influenza season threshold has not yet been reached.

Virological Surveillance

During week 44, 29 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 samples for influenza or SARS-CoV-2 were detected.

CUMULATIVE DATA

Epidemiological Surveillance

In the 2025/2026 season, the total number of influenza/ILI cases is 338 (I=18.4/100,000).

Compared to the same period last season (n=195), the number of reported cases increased by 73.3%. Compared to the 15-season model (n=266), an increase of 27.1% was recorded.

Cumulatively, cases were reported from 12 Centers for Public Health (CPH/Regional Units).

- The highest number of cases (n=126; I=148.8/100,000) was registered in Gostivar.
- The highest cumulative incidence (257.1/100,000) was registered in Makedonski Brod (n=26).

By age distribution:

- 15–64 years: 262 cases (77.5%)

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

Virological Surveillance

So far in the 2025/2026 season, 139 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 are especially 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, soups), fresh juices, lemon water.
- Consume fresh products rich in vitamins and minerals, especially fruits and vegetables. Vitamin C-rich foods (citrus fruits) are particularly recommended. Multivitamin preparations may also be used.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle: adequate sleep, healthy diet, physical and mental activity, stress reduction.

A strong immune system helps you stay healthy or cope more easily with influenza, but even healthy individuals may become ill.

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; eat light meals.
- Avoid close contact with household members; do not receive visitors.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing; dispose of tissues properly.
- Wear a protective mask when in contact with household members.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly.
- Use alcohol-based wipes or hand disinfectants.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Ventilate your room frequently.
- Keep your environment clean (objects and surfaces).
- If you are over 65, have chronic diseases, or symptoms worsen or last several days, seek medical assistance.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL COMMENT

An increase in the number and incidence of influenza-like illnesses is observed; however, activity remains at interseasonal levels typical for this time of year.

INFLUENZA VACCINATION

Seasonal influenza vaccination is the most effective protection.

The Institute of Public Health recommends vaccination for the entire population, especially for 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 groups.

Vaccination began on 16.10.2025 and is conducted in Centers for Public Health and their regional units and/or Health Centers. Healthcare workers in Skopje are vaccinated 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:

- 52,652 people from risk categories were vaccinated with free vaccines.
- 2,400 additional commercial vaccine doses were procured.
- 462 people were vaccinated with commercial vaccines.

Total vaccinated in the Republic of North Macedonia: 53,114 persons (free or commercial vaccines).

EUROPEAN REGION

According to the ERVISS report for week 43, 2025:

- Influenza-like illness (ILI) and/or acute respiratory infection (ARI) rates were above baseline in 5 of 31 WHO European Region reporting countries.
- Influenza activity remains below the regional seasonal epidemic threshold but has increased above interseasonal levels in recent weeks, with clear increases in several countries.
- SARS-CoV-2 indicators are generally decreasing at the regional level, with variation between countries. XFG remains the dominant SARS-CoV-2 variant.
- RSV activity indicators remain at interseasonal levels across the Region.

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