

Influenza situation in the Republic of North Macedonia, season 2025/2026 (Week 46, up to 16.11.2025)

WEEKLY DATA

Epidemiological Surveillance

During week 46 of 2025 (10–16 November 2025), in the Republic of North Macedonia, 117 cases were reported ($I = 6.4/100,000$ population) based on group notifications of influenza/influenza-like illness (ILI), which is one case more compared to the previous week ($n = 116$).

Compared to week 45 of the previous season, an increase of 82.8% was observed (64 cases registered), while compared to the model for the past 15 seasons ($n = 79$), an increase of 48.5% was recorded.

Cases this week were registered in: Gostivar – 35, Kumanovo – 30, Tetovo – 14, while in Shtip, Skopje, Kavadarci, Strumica, Radovish, Ohrid, Negotino, Bitola, and Prilep fewer than 10 cases were reported in each.

By age group:

- 15–64 years: 89 cases
- Over 65 years: 24 cases
- 5–14 years: 3 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 46, 17 samples from routine and SARI (Severe Acute Respiratory Infection) surveillance were received at the virology laboratory of the Institute of Public Health for laboratory testing, simultaneously tested for Influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and/or RSV.

Of the total tested samples:

- No positive samples for Influenza or RSV were detected.
- One positive case of SARS-CoV-2 was detected.

CUMULATIVE DATA

Epidemiological Surveillance

In the 2025/2026 season, the total number of influenza/ILI cases is 571 ($I = 31.1/100,000$).

Compared to the same period last season ($n = 326$), the number of reported cases increased by 75.2%, while compared to the 15-season model ($n = 416$), an increase of 37.2% was registered.

Cumulatively, cases have been reported from 15 Centers for Public Health/Regional Units. The highest number of cases ($n = 195$; $I = 230.3/100,000$) was registered in Gostivar, while the highest cumulative incidence ($257.1/100,000$) was recorded in Makedonski Brod ($n = 26$).

By age distribution, the largest number of cases was reported in the 15–64 age group – 437 cases (76.5%).

Virological Surveillance

Since the beginning of the 2025/26 season, 171 samples from routine and SARI surveillance have been received for laboratory testing (Influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and/or RSV).

Of the total tested samples:

- No positive influenza samples were detected.
- 4 positive results for SARS-CoV-2 were registered.
- 2 positive RSV results were registered (1 unsubtyped RSV and 1 RSV-B).

GENERAL PREVENTIVE MEASURES

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

General protective measures against influenza apply to all acute respiratory infections and are especially useful when implemented throughout the winter period:

- Avoid gatherings and staying in crowded indoor spaces, especially close contact with individuals who are ill or suspected of being ill (coughing, sneezing, fever).
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use hand disinfectant.
- Keep indoor areas warm and ventilate frequently.
- Dress warmly in layers; take warm baths.
- Drink warm beverages (tea and soups), fresh fruit juices, and lemon water.
- Consume fresh foods rich in vitamins and minerals, especially fruits and vegetables. Vitamin C-rich products (lemons, oranges, citrus fruits) are particularly recommended. If fresh products are 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 will help you remain healthy or cope more easily with influenza and influenza-like illnesses. However, even healthy individuals with strong immunity can become ill.

What to Do If You Get the Flu

- Stay at 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 and dispose of it properly.
- Wear a protective mask when in contact with household members if coughing or sneezing.

- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with warm water and soap.
- Use alcohol-based wet wipes or hand disinfectant.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Ventilate the room frequently.
- Maintain cleanliness of objects and surfaces in your surroundings.
- If you are over 65 years old, have chronic diseases, or if symptoms worsen or persist for several days, seek medical assistance.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL COMMENT

A gradual increase in the number and incidence of influenza-like illnesses is observed; however, activity remains at inter-seasonal levels, which is characteristic 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 for high-risk groups (according to WHO recommendations):

- Elderly persons (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 provided 80,000 doses of free quadrivalent vaccine for priority population groups.

Vaccination began on 16 October 2025 and is conducted in Centers for Public Health and their Regional Units and/or Health Centers. Vaccination of healthcare workers in Skopje is conducted at the Institute of Public Health. Appointments for free vaccines are scheduled via the website www.vakcinacija.mk.

According to data from the e-Health Administration, from the start of vaccination until the closing of this report, 73,145 persons from risk categories have been vaccinated with free vaccines.

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

According to data from the e-Health Administration, 1,424 persons have been vaccinated with commercial vaccines.

In total, 74,569 persons in the Republic of North Macedonia have been vaccinated with either free or commercial vaccines.

EUROPEAN REGION

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

According to the ERVISS report published for week 45 of 2025:

Rates of influenza-like illness (ILI) and/or acute respiratory infection (ARI) were above baseline levels in three countries — Kazakhstan, Spain, and Albania — within the WHO European Region that submitted reports.

During week 45, for the first time, influenza positivity exceeded 10%, although only three countries reported moderate influenza virus activity. Among hospitalized cases, an increased number of influenza cases was also detected, primarily affecting those aged 65 years and older. In most cases, Influenza A(H3) was identified.

Regional indicators of SARS-CoV-2 activity continue to decline, although with variation between countries.

Indicators of RSV activity remain at a reduced level; however, the number of hospitalizations is increasing.

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