

Influenza situation in the Republic of North Macedonia, season 2025/2026 (Week 47, up to 23.11.2025)

WEEKLY DATA

Epidemiological Surveillance

During week 47 of 2025 (17–23 November 2025), in the Republic of North Macedonia, 91 cases were reported ($I = 5.0/100,000$ population) based on group notifications of influenza/influenza-like illness (ILI), representing a 22.2% decrease compared to the previous week ($n = 117$).

Compared to week 47 of the previous season, an increase of 44.4% was observed (63 cases registered), while compared to the model for the past 15 seasons ($n = 89$), an increase of 2.2% was recorded.

Cases this week were reported in 11 Centers for Public Health (CPH/Regional Units), specifically: Gostivar – 35, Tetovo – 13, Shtip and Strumica – 11 each, while in Kumanovo, Prilep, Skopje, Radovish, Negotino, Kavadarci, and Sveti Nikole fewer than 10 cases were registered in each.

By age group:

- 15–64 years: 71 cases
- Over 65 years: 13 cases
- 5–14 years: 7 cases
- 0–4 years: no registered 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 47, 26 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:

- Two positive cases of Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 were detected – the first positive influenza results for the 2025/26 season.
- One positive case of SARS-CoV-2 was detected.
- No positive RSV samples were detected.

CUMULATIVE DATA

Epidemiological Surveillance

In the 2025/2026 season, the total number of influenza/ILI cases is 662 ($I = 36.0/100,000$).

Compared to the same period last season (n = 389), the number of reported cases increased by 70.2%, while compared to the 15-season model (n = 505), an increase of 31.1% was registered.

Cumulatively, cases have been reported from 15 CPH/Regional Units. The highest number of cases and the highest cumulative incidence (n = 230; I = 271.7/100,000) were registered in Gostivar.

By age distribution, the largest number of cases was reported in the 15–64 age group – 508 cases (76.7%).

Virological Surveillance

Since the beginning of the 2025/26 season, 197 samples from routine and SARI surveillance have been received for laboratory testing (Influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and/or RSV).

Of the total tested samples:

- 5 positive for SARS-CoV-2
- 2 positive for RSV (1 untyped RSV and 1 RSV-B)
- 2 positive for Influenza – Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09

GENERAL PREVENTIVE MEASURES

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

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

- Avoid gatherings and 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 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 products rich in vitamins and minerals, especially fruits and vegetables. Vitamin C-rich foods (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 illness. However, even perfectly 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

Weekly variation in the number and incidence of influenza-like illnesses is observed, but activity remains at inter-seasonal levels. During the previous week, the first influenza cases were registered; however, the positivity rate remains below 10%. According to these data, influenza virus activity remains sporadic and of low intensity.

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.

According to data from the e-Health Administration, from the start of vaccination until the closing of this report, 75,115 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, 1,894 persons have been vaccinated with commercial vaccines.

In total, 77,009 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 46 of 2025:

Rates of influenza-like illness (ILI) and/or acute respiratory infection (ARI) were above baseline levels in 6 of 32 countries in the WHO European Region reporting data.

During week 45, for the first time, influenza positivity exceeded 10%, marking the start of the influenza epidemic in the European Region. Virus activity varies across the region, with higher activity observed in the western part. Among hospitalized cases, an increased number of influenza cases has also been detected, primarily affecting those aged 65 years and older. In most cases, Influenza A(H3) was detected.

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

Indicators of RSV activity have increased at the regional level, with children under five years of age being the most affected population group.

Department of Epidemiology of Infectious Diseases
Institute of Public Health