

INFLUENZA SITUATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA, SEASON 2025/2026 (Week 52, up to 28.12.2025)

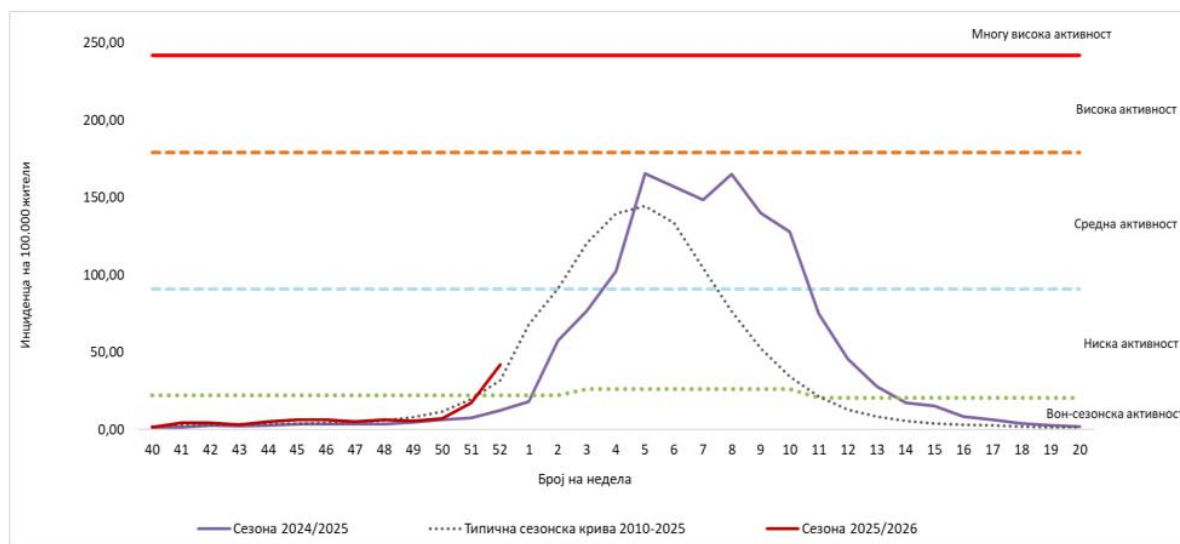
WEEKLY DATA

During week 52 of 2025 (22–28 December 2025), 771 cases ($I = 42.0/100,000$ population) of influenza/influenza-like illness (ILI) were reported in the Republic of North Macedonia, which is 2.5 times higher compared to the previous week ($n = 314$).

Compared to week 52 of the previous season ($n = 225$), the number of reported cases increased 3.4-fold, while compared to the typical epidemic curve for week 52 (modeled from the last 15 seasons; $n = 587$), an increase of 31.4% was registered. (Graph.1)

For the first time this season, the threshold for off-season activity ($I = 22.03/100,000$) has been exceeded, and seasonal influenza activity at the national level has been registered. (Graph.1)

Graph 1. Intensity levels and weekly distribution of influenza/flu-like illness cases according to the expected epidemic curve 2010-2025, season 2024/2025, and season 2025/2026.



Regarding the age distribution, 15–64 years: 455 cases, 5–14 years: 175 cases, 0–4 years: 73 cases, ≥ 65 years: 68 cases. The highest weekly incidence ($81.5/100,000$) was registered among children aged 5–14 years.

Geographic distribution

Cases were reported from 23 Centers for Public Health/Regional Units:

Skopje – 194, Tetovo – 170, Veles – 106, Gostivar – 50, Kumanovo – 39, Shtip – 32, Ohrid – 27, Debar – 24, Bitola – 18, Strumica – 17, Kavadarci – 12, Prilep and Makedonski Brod – 11 each, Resen – 10.

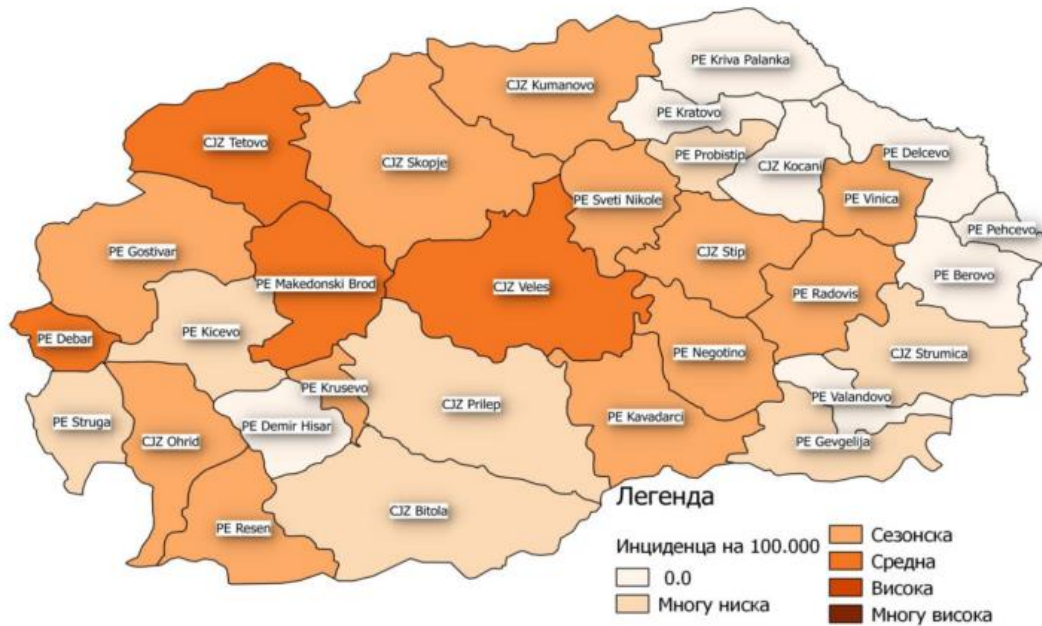
In Kichevo, Gevgelija, Negotino, Sveti Nikole, Vinica, Struga, Krushevo, Probishtip, and Radovish, fewer than 10 cases were registered.

Among the reporting units with registered cases this week:

- 7 reported very low activity
- 12 reported seasonal activity

4 units (Veles, Debar, Makedonski Brod, and Tetovo) reported medium seasonal activity (Cartogram 1).

Cartogram 1. Influenza activity levels based on incidence per 100,000 inhabitants, 52nd week of 2025.



Virological Surveillance

During week 52, 77 specimens from routine and SARI (Severe Acute Respiratory Infection) surveillance were received at the virology laboratory of the Institute of Public Health, tested in parallel for Influenza, SARS-CoV-2, and/or RSV.

Of the tested samples:

- 14 positive influenza cases were detected:
 - 10 Influenza A(H3)
 - 4 Influenza A (unsubtyped)
- 2 RSV cases were detected (1 RSV-A and 1 RSV-B)
- No SARS-CoV-2 positive cases were detected

CUMULATIVE DATA

Epidemiological Surveillance

Since the beginning of the 2025/2026 season, a total of 2,100 influenza/ILI cases have been reported (I = 114.3/100,000).

Compared to the same period last season (n = 1,024), the number of reported cases has doubled (2.05 times higher), while compared to the 15-season model (n = 1,929), an increase of 8.9% was registered.

Cumulatively, cases were reported from 25 Centers for Public Health/Regional Units.

- The highest number of cases (n = 350) was registered in Tetovo.
- The highest cumulative incidence (I = 801.1/100,000; n = 81) was registered in Makedonski Brod.

Age distribution (cumulative)

- 15–64 years: 1,411 cases (67.2%)
- Highest cumulative incidence: 0–4 years (149.2/100,000)

Monthly distribution

- October: 338 cases (16.1%)
- November: 438 cases (20.9%)
- December (up to 28.12.2025): 1,324 cases (63.0%)

No influenza-associated deaths have been reported so far this season.

Virological Surveillance (Cumulative)

From the beginning of the 2025/2026 season through week 52, 370 specimens were tested.

Of the total tested samples:

- 26 positive influenza cases:
 - 16 Influenza A(H3)
 - 5 Influenza A(H1)pdm09
 - 5 Influenza A (unsubtyped)
- 5 SARS-CoV-2 positive cases
- 10 RSV positive cases (1 unsubtyped RSV, 3 RSV-A, 6 RSV-B)

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL COMMENT

A significant increase in the number and incidence of influenza-like illnesses is observed at the weekly level. During week 52 of 2025, seasonal influenza activity was registered at the national level for the first time this season.

The number of reported cases increased compared to the previous week, the same period last season, and the expected epidemic curve.

Cases were reported from a larger number of reporting units, with seasonal activity registered in several regions, indicating regional spread of the influenza virus.

The highest weekly incidence was registered among children aged 5–14 years.

No influenza-associated deaths have been reported so far this season. Based on available data, influenza virus activity shows regional spread, with expectations of further increase in activity in the coming period.

GENERAL PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Source: <https://sezonskiqrip.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 individuals who are ill.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use disinfectant.
- Keep indoor spaces warm and ventilated.
- Dress warmly in layers.
- Drink warm beverages and consume vitamin-rich foods, especially fruits and vegetables.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle, including adequate sleep, balanced nutrition, physical and mental activity, and stress reduction.

If you become ill:

- Stay at home.
- Rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- Avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Wear a mask when in contact with household members.
- Maintain hand and environmental hygiene.
- Seek medical assistance if you are over 65, have chronic diseases, or if symptoms worsen or persist.

INFLUENZA VACCINATION

Seasonal influenza vaccination remains the most effective preventive measure. Vaccination is especially recommended for:

- Elderly persons (≥65 years)
- Children aged 6–59 months
- Persons over 6 months with chronic diseases
- Pregnant women
- Healthcare workers

For the 2025/2026 season, 80,000 doses of free quadrivalent influenza vaccine were provided for priority groups.

According to data from the e-Health Administration (as of week 52):

- 77,101 persons were vaccinated with free vaccines
- 1,810 persons were vaccinated with commercial vaccines

In total, 78,877 persons have been vaccinated in the Republic of North Macedonia.

EUROPEAN REGION

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

According to the ERVISS report for week 50 of 2025 (latest update):

- ILI and/or acute respiratory infection (ARI) rates were above baseline levels in 24 of 32 reporting countries in the WHO European Region.
- All influenza activity indicators continue to rise across the region, with increased intensity, higher numbers of detections, and higher positivity rates. Sentinel surveillance positivity is highest among children aged 5–14 years. Hospital admissions due to influenza are also increasing, mainly among persons aged ≥ 65 years. Influenza A(H3) remains the dominant circulating virus.
- Regional SARS-CoV-2 activity indicators continue to decline.
- RSV detections and positivity rates continue to increase regionally, with the highest burden among children under 5 years of age.

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