

INFLUENZA SITUATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA, SEASON 2025/2026 (Week 45, up to 09.11.2025)

WEEKLY DATA

Epidemiological Surveillance

During week 45 of 2025 (03–09 November 2025), 116 cases ($I = 6.3/100,000$ population) of influenza/influenza-like illness (ILI) were reported in the Republic of North Macedonia, representing a 23.4% increase compared to the previous week ($n = 94$).

Compared to week 45 of the previous season (67 cases), this represents an increase of 73.1%, while compared to the model for the past 15 seasons ($n = 71$), an increase of 62.4% was recorded.

Cases this week were registered in:

Kumanovo – 46, Gostivar – 34, Shtip – 10, Tetovo – 8, Krushevo – 6, Strumica – 4, Negotino – 3, Radovish – 2, and Skopje, Kavadarci, and Sveti Nikole – 1 case each.

By age group:

- 15–64 years: 86 cases
- ≥ 65 years: 16 cases
- 5–14 years: 9 cases
- 0–4 years: 5 cases

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 45, 15 samples from routine and SARI (Severe Acute Respiratory Infection) surveillance were received at the virology laboratory of the Institute of Public Health and tested in parallel for Influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and/or RSV.

No positive samples for influenza or SARS-CoV-2 were detected.

Two RSV-positive cases were registered (1 untyped RSV and 1 RSV-B).

CUMULATIVE DATA

Epidemiological Surveillance

In the 2025/2026 season, the total number of influenza/ILI cases is 454 ($I = 24.7/100,000$).

Compared to the same period last season ($n = 262$), the number of reported cases increased by 73.3%, while compared to the 15-season model ($n = 337$), an increase of 34.6% was recorded.

Cumulatively, cases have been reported from 14 Centers for Public Health/Regional Units.

The highest number of cases (n = 160; I = 189.0/100,000) was registered in Gostivar, while the highest cumulative incidence (257.1/100,000; n = 26) was registered in Makedonski Brod.

By age distribution, the largest number of cases was reported in the 15–64 age group – 348 cases (76.7%).

Virological Surveillance

Since the beginning of the 2025/2026 season, 154 samples have been tested.

No positive influenza samples were detected.

Three positive SARS-CoV-2 cases and two RSV-positive cases (1 untyped RSV and 1 RSV-B) were registered.

GENERAL PREVENTIVE MEASURES

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

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

- Avoid gatherings and crowded indoor spaces, especially close contact with individuals who are ill or suspected to be ill (coughing, sneezing, fever).
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use disinfectant.
- Keep indoor spaces warm and ventilated.
- Dress warmly in layers; take warm baths.
- Drink warm beverages (tea and soups), fresh juices, and lemon water.
- Consume fresh foods 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, physical and mental activity, and stress reduction.

A strong immune system will help you remain healthy or cope more easily with influenza and influenza-like illness. 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 and 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.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly.
- Use alcohol-based wet wipes or hand disinfectant.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

- Ventilate the room frequently.
- Maintain cleanliness of surfaces and objects 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

An 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 (≥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 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 vaccination are scheduled via www.vakcinacija.mk.

According to data from the e-Health Administration, 66,987 persons from risk categories have been vaccinated with free vaccines, and 1,033 persons with commercial vaccines.

In total, 68,020 persons have been vaccinated in the Republic of North Macedonia.

EUROPEAN REGION

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

According to the ERVISS report for week 44 of 2025:

ILI and/or acute respiratory infection (ARI) rates were above baseline levels in 2 of 30 reporting countries in the WHO European Region.

Influenza activity remains below the regional seasonal epidemic threshold, but indicators continue to increase across the Region. The increase is more pronounced in primary healthcare reports, where positivity rates are at their highest for this period since 2022. Almost all detected influenza viruses are

type A, predominantly subtyped as Influenza A(H3). Reported influenza cases and deaths in hospitals and intensive care units remain at low levels.

Regional SARS-CoV-2 activity indicators are generally declining, with variations between countries. XFG remains the dominant SARS-CoV-2 variant in the Region.

RSV activity indicators are increasing but remain at inter-seasonal levels across the Region.

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