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Recommendations of the National Laboratory of Virology of the UP for the holidays

The preliminary forecast has been confirmed: this year's influenza epidemic has come earlier and, according to experience so far, is more intense than usual. During the trigeminal period, when influenza occurs at the same time as two other viruses, RSV and Covid, and which exacerbates the epidemic situation, it is particularly important to ensure maximum protection of the groups most at risk, including increased hygiene and vaccination, before the return to school following the long winter break.

In line with international data, this year's respiratory infection season in Hungary has started earlier and faster than usual. It is not only influenza that is causing more widespread illnesses: there is also a combined spread of RSV and SARS-CoV-2. As the latest information from the National Centre for Public Health shows, in some counties and in Budapest, the incidence of influenza-like illnesses has already doubled in week 48 compared to a year ago.

In the coming weeks, the three respiratory viruses are expected to increase further, with more people presenting to their doctor with flu-like symptoms.  
International experience also suggests that a more severe influenza pandemic, in terms of both number of cases and clinical presentation, cannot be ruled out, partly due to years of 'missed' years due to previous restrictions on the epidemic, and to weaker flock immunity, thus justifying the early uptake of preventive vaccination.

As Dr. Gábor Kemenesi, a viral researcher and adjunct professor at the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Pécs, reminds us, the characteristic of influenza is that the epidemic is caused by different virus strains every year, so the vaccine has to be produced again every year. Based on the data so far, it seems that this time the targeting has been accurate: the dominant influenza virus strains have been hit, contributing to the expected outstanding efficacy of this year's vaccine.