Candida auris: A drug-resistant germ that spreads in healthcare facilities

*Candida auris* (also called *C. auris*) is a fungus that causes serious infections. Patients with *C. auris* infection, their family members and other close contacts, public health officials, laboratory staff, and healthcare workers can all help stop it from spreading.

### Why is *Candida auris* a problem?

| **It causes serious infections.** *C. auris* can cause bloodstream infections and even death, particularly in hospital and nursing home patients with serious medical problems. More than 1 in 3 patients with invasive *C. auris* infection (for example, an infection that affects the blood, heart, or brain) die. |
| **It's often resistant to medicines.** Antifungal medicines commonly used to treat *Candida* infections often don’t work for *Candida auris*. Some *C. auris* infections have been resistant to all three types of antifungal medicines. |
| **It's becoming more common.** Although *C. auris* was just discovered in 2009, it has spread quickly and caused infections in more than a dozen countries. |
| **It's difficult to identify.** *C. auris* can be misidentified as other types of fungi unless specialized laboratory technology is used. This misidentification might lead to a patient getting the wrong treatment. |
| **It can spread in hospitals and nursing homes.** *C. auris* has caused outbreaks in healthcare facilities and can spread through contact with affected patients and contaminated surfaces or equipment. Good hand hygiene and cleaning in healthcare facilities is important because *C. auris* can live on surfaces for several weeks. |

### How do I know if I have a *Candida auris* infection?

*C. auris* is still rare in the United States. People who get invasive *Candida* infections are often already sick from other medical conditions, so it can be difficult to know if you have a *C. auris* infection. The most common symptoms of invasive *Candida* infection are fever and chills that don’t improve after antibiotic treatment for a suspected bacterial infection. Only a laboratory test can diagnose *C. auris* infection. Talk to your healthcare provider if you believe you have a fungal or healthcare-associated infection.

Most people who get serious *Candida* infections are already sick from other medical conditions.
Stopping the spread of *Candida auris*

CDC is working with public health partners, healthcare workers, and laboratories to stop the spread of *C. auris* in healthcare settings. Here’s how CDC is asking everyone to help:

**Family members and other close contacts of patients with *C. auris***

- Clean your hands with hand sanitizer or soap and water before and after touching a patient with *C. auris* or equipment in his or her room.
- Remind healthcare workers to clean their hands.

**Laboratory staff, healthcare workers, and public health officials***

- Know when to suspect *C. auris* and how to properly identify it.
- Report cases quickly to public health departments.
- For healthcare workers, clean hands correctly and use precautions like wearing gowns and gloves to prevent spread.
- Clean patient rooms thoroughly with a disinfectant that works against *C. auris*.
- Investigate *C. auris* cases quickly and determine additional ways to prevent spread.
- Check the CDC website for the most up-to-date guidance on identifying and managing *C. auris*: https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/candidiasis/recommendations.html.

**Scientists are still learning about *Candida auris***

CDC and public health partners are working hard to better understand *C. auris* and answer the following questions so that we can continue to help protect people from this serious infection:

- Why is *C. auris* resistant to antifungal medicines?
- Why did *C. auris* start causing infections in recent years?
- Where did *C. auris* originally come from, and why has it appeared in many regions of the world at the same time?

**What is CDC doing?**

CDC is collaborating closely with partners to better respond, contain spread, and prevent future infections by:

- Advising healthcare workers and infection control staff on ways to stop the spread of *C. auris* and continually updating this guidance as we learn more about the infection.
- Working with state and local health agencies, healthcare facilities, and clinical microbiology laboratories to ensure that laboratories are using proper methods to detect *C. auris*.
- Testing *C. auris* strains to monitor for resistance to antifungal medicines.
- Examining the DNA of *C. auris* strains using whole genome sequencing to better understand how this germ is spreading in the United States and around the world.
- Working with public health partners in the United States and internationally to learn more about how *C. auris* spreads in healthcare facilities and to eliminate it from those facilities.

For more information:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC),
National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases
Division of Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmental Diseases
Candida auris Colonization
Information for Patients

*Candida auris* (also called *C. auris*) is a fungus that can cause serious infections. *C. auris* can spread from one patient to another in hospitals and nursing homes. Patients can carry *C. auris* somewhere on their body, even if it is not making them sick. This is called colonization. When people in hospitals and nursing homes are colonized, *C. auris* can spread from their bodies and can get on other people or nearby objects, allowing the fungus to spread to people around them.

CDC recommends testing patients who may have come in contact with *C. auris* to see if they are carrying the fungus. This allows healthcare providers to know who is carrying the fungus and take steps to prevent it from spreading to other people.

What does it mean to be colonized?

Colonization, or being colonized with *C. auris*, means that a person has the fungus somewhere on their body but does not have an infection or symptoms of infection. A simple test can be done to see who is colonized with *C. auris*. People who are colonized with *C. auris* may not know and can pass the fungus to another person. People colonized with *C. auris* might later get sick from this fungus, so healthcare providers should consider taking extra steps to prevent infection.

In order to reduce spread to other patients, healthcare providers should use precautions when caring for patients with *C. auris*, which may include:

- Placing the patient in a room without a roommate.
- Having healthcare staff or other caregivers wear gowns and gloves during patient care.
- Cleaning the room with different products than usual.
- Having family members and healthcare staff clean their hands thoroughly after visiting the patient. The patient may also be encouraged to wash their hands often.
- Performing another test later to see if the fungus is still there.

What can I do to help keep *C. auris* from spreading?

Patients and family members should clean their hands thoroughly before and after touching each other or the area around the patient, particularly when leaving a patient’s room.

Although the risk of *C. auris* infection in otherwise healthy people is low, patients and their family members should continue practicing good hand hygiene when returning home. If family members are caring for patients with *C. auris*, they should consider wearing disposable gloves when providing certain types of care like changing the dressing on wounds and helping the patient bathe.

If you are colonized with *C. auris*, tell your healthcare providers when visiting healthcare offices and when admitted to hospitals and nursing homes.

Want to learn more?

[www.cdc.gov/fungal/candida-auris](http://www.cdc.gov/fungal/candida-auris)