



## **Candida auris Information for Patients and Family Members**

### [Español \(Spanish\).](#)

*Candida auris* (*C. auris*) is a type of fungus that can cause serious illness in hospitalized patients. Infections with this fungus can be difficult to treat. *C. auris* only recently appeared in the United States, and public health officials are researching more about how it is spread. Here's what you need to know if you or a family member have a *C. auris* infection.

### **What are the symptoms of *C. auris* infection?**

- Symptoms may not be noticeable, because patients with *C. auris* infection are often already sick in the hospital with another serious illness or condition.
- Symptoms of *C. auris* infection depend on the part of the body affected. *C. auris* can cause many different types of infection, such as bloodstream infection, wound infection, and ear infection.
- Because symptoms can vary greatly, a laboratory test is needed to determine whether a patient has a *C. auris* infection.

### **Who is most likely to get *C. auris* infection?**

- *C. auris* mainly affects patients who already have many medical problems.
- It often affects people who have had frequent hospital stays or live in nursing homes.
- *C. auris* is more likely to affect patients who have weakened immune systems from conditions such as blood cancers or diabetes, receive lots of antibiotics, or have devices like tubes going into their body (for example, breathing tubes, feeding tubes, catheters in a vein, or bladder catheters).
- Healthy people usually don't get *C. auris* infections.

### **Are *C. auris* infections treatable?**

- Most *C. auris* infections are treatable with a class of antifungal medications called echinocandins.
- Some *C. auris* infections have been resistant to all three main classes of antifungal medications, making them difficult to treat. In this situation, multiple antifungal medications at high doses may be needed to treat the infection.

### **How serious can *C. auris* infection be?**

- Any invasive infection, which includes bloodstream infection with any *Candida* species, can be serious and even fatal.
- Many people who have died with *C. auris* had other serious illnesses that increased their risk of death.

### **Why does a patient with *C. auris* infection need special precautions during care?**

- *C. auris* can spread from one patient to another in healthcare settings, such as hospitals and nursing homes, even if *C. auris* is on the skin or other body sites and the patient does not have symptoms.
- Special precautions reduce the chance of spreading the fungus to other patients. These precautions may include:
  - Placing the patient in a different room.
  - Having healthcare personnel or other caregivers wear gowns and gloves during patient care.
  - Cleaning the room with different products than usual.
  - Having family members and healthcare personnel clean their hands thoroughly after visiting the patient. The patient may also be encouraged to wash their hands often.

### **How long does a patient with *C. auris* need to be under these special precautions?**

- Even after *C. auris* infection is treated, patients might continue to have *C. auris* on their skin or other body sites that doesn't cause infection or illness but can still spread to other patients.
- Special precautions should continue as long the patient has *C. auris* on the skin or other body sites. In most situations, precautions should be continued for the entire duration of the patient's stay in a healthcare facility. More about the duration of precautions can be found in CDC's infection control guidance.

**Can a nursing home patient with *C. auris* participate in activities with others, such as meals or social gatherings, if they are on these special precautions?**

- In general, residents of nursing homes who have *C. auris* on their skin or other body sites or are sick with a *C. auris* infection can leave their rooms to attend meals and group functions if:
  - They can wash their hands thoroughly on a regular basis.
  - Wounds are bandaged to prevent any fluids from seeping out and infecting others.
  - Other types of secretions like phlegm are contained.
  - Items that residents touch often and shared equipment (for example, physical therapy equipment or recreational resources) should be cleaned and disinfected after use.

**Can family members get sick?**

- Family members who are healthy probably have a low chance of *C. auris* infection.
- *C. auris* is mainly a problem among people who are already sick with multiple medical problems and have spent a lot of time in healthcare settings.
- Family members and others caring for patients with *C. auris* should wash their hands thoroughly before and after touching the patient or touching medical devices.
- Handwashing is particularly important if the caregiver is caring for more than one ill person at home.
- Ask and remind healthcare personnel to wash their hands.

**Should family members or other close contacts of patients be tested for *C. auris*?**

- In most instances, CDC does not recommend that family members or other close contacts of patients with *C. auris* infections be tested for *C. auris*.
- However, if someone who has frequent contact with a patient with *C. auris* is admitted to a healthcare facility, a healthcare provider might test them for *C. auris* to determine if special precautions should be used.

**What should people who have tested positive for *C. auris* do after being discharged from healthcare facilities?**

- People who have tested positive for *C. auris* should inform healthcare providers that they have tested positive for *C. auris* when visiting healthcare offices and when being admitted to hospitals and nursing homes.

For additional assistance and consultation please contact our HCQC infection preventionist and HAI staff at [Outbreak@health.nv.gov](mailto:Outbreak@health.nv.gov)