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# What is *Candida auris*?

*Candida auris*, also called *C. auris*, is a yeast (type of fungus) that causes severe infections and can spread in healthcare settings. *C. auris* can infect any body part, including the blood or a wound. *C. auris* infections can be difficult to treat because most are resistant to at least one medicine used to treat fungal infections, referred to as an antifungal medicine. *C. auris* can also live on the skin or other body parts without making a person sick. This is called being "colonized."

# What does it mean to be colonized?

Colonization means that a person is carrying *C. auris* somewhere on their body, but does not have an infection or any symptoms of infection. If you have been around a patient with *C. auris* infection, your healthcare provider might run a simple test to see if you are carrying the fungus. People who are colonized with *C. auris* can pass the fungus to another person. If you are colonized with *C. auris*, you might later get sick from the fungus, so your healthcare provider might take certain steps to prevent infection.

# Who gets *Candida auris* infection?

Scientists first discovered *C. auris* in Japan in 2009. Since then, it has spread quickly to other countries. *C. auris* has emerged in the United States and is quickly becoming more common.

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

# How is *Candida auris* spread?

*C. auris* can spread from patient to patient in healthcare settings, such as hospitals and nursing homes, by direct contact. It might also be spread by contact with contaminated surfaces in the environment.

# What are the symptoms of *Candida auris* infection?

Symptoms might not be noticeable because patients infected with *C. auris* are often already sick with another serious illness or condition. The symptoms of *C. auris* infection depend on the body part that is affected. For bloodstream infections, the most common symptoms are fever and chills.

## How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

Scientists do not know how long it takes for symptoms to appear. It probably varies from patient to patient.

## How is *Candida auris* infection diagnosed?

A laboratory test on blood or another specimen is needed to confirm the diagnosis.

## What is the treatment for *Candida auris* infection?

Most *C. auris* infections can be treated with antifungal medicines. Rarely, *C. auris* infections might be resistant to all three major types of antifungal medicines. For these rare cases, treatment options are severely limited.

## How can *Candida auris* infection be prevented?

To prevent *C. auris* infection, people should regularly wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (if hands are not visibly soiled) to keep them clean. Healthcare providers should follow infection prevention and control measures, such as the proper use of gowns and gloves. Because *C. auris* can live on surfaces in healthcare environments, regular cleaning and disinfection of the environment with products that are effective against *C. auris* are also important. When a patient with *C. auris* is transferred to another healthcare facility, the receiving facility should be notified of the patient's infection or colonization status so that the appropriate infection prevention and control measures can be promptly used.

## What if I have *Candida auris*?

Be sure to notify your healthcare provider every time you go to a medical visit, hospital, nursing home, or dialysis clinic. Bring this paper if you need help remembering the name of the fungus.

Follow your healthcare provider's instructions. If your provider prescribes you antifungal medicines, take them exactly as instructed and finish the full course, even if you feel better. Follow any other medical or hygiene advice your provider gives you.

Wash your hands with soap and warm water, especially before eating or preparing food, before and after changing wound dressings or bandages, after using the bathroom, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available. This is good advice for everyone. Make sure your caregivers wash their hands before and after touching you or your medical devices. Handwashing is particularly important if the caregiver is caring for more than one sick person at home. Gloves should be used when contact with body fluids or blood is possible. Ask and remind healthcare providers to wash their hands.

## What if I am caring for someone with *Candida auris* at home?

Family members who are healthy 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 being cared for in healthcare settings.

Family members or others caring for patients with *C. auris* infection should regularly clean hands before and after touching the patient or touching medical devices. Handwashing is particularly important if the caregiver is caring for more than one sick person at home. Gloves should be used when contact with body fluids or blood is possible. Family members and caregivers should also ask and remind healthcare providers to wash their hands.

## How can I learn more about *Candida auris* infection?

- If you have concerns about *Candida auris* infection, contact your healthcare provider.
- Call your local health department. A directory of local health departments is located at the VDH Local Health Districts page.
- Visit the Virginia Department of Health page on *Candida auris* or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention page on Candida auris.

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