

Candida auris

A drug-resistant germ that spreads in healthcare facilities



What is *Candida auris*?

The germ, *Candida auris*, or *C. auris* for short, is a fungus (also called a yeast) that can cause severe illness and spreads easily among patients in healthcare facilities. *C. auris* can cause a range of infections from superficial (skin) infections to more severe, life-threatening infections, such as bloodstream infections.

What is colonization?

Patients can become colonized with *C. auris*. Colonization means people carry *C. auris* on their bodies but don't have any illness symptoms. Colonization can last for many months and even years.

Why is *C. auris* a problem?

C. auris can spread quickly from person to person in healthcare facilities on healthcare workers' hands, healthcare equipment, and surfaces, if they are not cleaned properly. *C. auris* is hard for laboratories to identify, is often resistant to many medications used for treatment, and requires special cleaning products. *C. auris* infections can be difficult to treat and even cause death. About 30-60% of patients with invasive *C. auris* infection die.

Who is more likely to get *C. auris*?

C. auris mainly affects patients who have long-term, serious medical problems. People who have been very sick and spent a lot of time in healthcare facilities are at the highest risk of becoming colonized with *C. auris*. Patients with invasive medical devices (breathing tubes, feeding tubes, catheters, etc.) are at higher risk for infection.

How does *C. auris* spread to patients?

Patients with infection or colonization with *C. auris* can shed the germs in skin cells and in body fluids. *C. auris* can contaminate healthcare workers' hands, clothing, and other items in the healthcare environment – like doorknobs, bed rails, stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, and thermometers—and can quickly spread to other patients.

How can we prevent the spread of *C. auris*?

To prevent spread of *C. auris* in healthcare facilities, healthcare workers should:

- Know how germs spread and make sure they do not carry them to other patients on their clothing, hands, or equipment.
- Wash or sanitize hands before and after caring for patients or touching items in the patient's room.
- Use the right personal protective equipment when caring for patients who can spread infections – often this includes gowns and gloves.

- Use effective cleaning products for disinfecting areas that might have *C. auris* germs on them. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lists disinfectants that are effective against *C. auris* (see [EPA List P](#)).
- Clean and disinfect equipment before and after use on a patient.

To prevent spread of *C. auris* in the home, you and your family should follow good general hygiene practices:

- Always clean your hands with soap and water:
 - Before preparing or eating food.
 - After using the bathroom.
 - Before and after touching any wounds or medical devices that you may have.
- Do not share personal care items like towels and washcloths with other people.
- Cover any wounds with a bandage whenever possible.
- No special cleaning is required in your home:
 - Your clothing may be washed in the usual manner, along with the rest of the household laundry.
 - All eating utensils and dishes can be washed the way you normally do.
- You do not need to take special precautions around your pets.

If you live with or have close contact with people who have indwelling medical devices, wounds, or a weakened immune system, please ask their primary medical provider for guidance, or call your [local health jurisdiction](#).

Who Should Be Tested for *C. auris*?

Public Health recommends testing patients for *C. auris* if they may have been exposed to another person with *C. auris* infection or colonization. The testing is to see if they have the *C. auris* germ on their body.

Should healthcare workers and family members be tested to see if they have *C. auris*?

Public Health does not recommend testing healthy family members or healthcare workers who care for patients with *C. auris*. In general, healthy people are not at risk from *C. auris* and do not need to be tested. However, healthcare facilities may decide to screen household contacts of patients with *C. auris* if they become ill and are admitted to a healthcare facility.



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