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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Candida auris

This information explains Candida auris (C. auris), including how it spreads and how it's treated.

## What is C. auris?

C. auris is a fungus (type of germ). It's resistant to many anti-fungal medications usually used to treat fungal infections. When a germ is resistant to a medication, that medication won't work to get rid of it or might not work as well as it should.

C. auris can lead to other problems, including:

- Pneumonia
- Blood infections
- Wound infections

## What is the difference between being colonized and being infected with C. auris?

You can either be colonized or infected with C. auris. If you're colonized, it means that the germ is in your body, but you don't have any symptoms. If you're infected with C. auris, it means that the germ is in your body and you have symptoms.

## How does C. auris spread?

Most C. auris infections are spread by direct contact with an infected person's bodily fluids, such as blood, drainage from a wound, urine (pee), bowel movements (poop), or sputum (thick mucus you cough up). It can also spread if you touch equipment or surfaces that have come in contact with the germ. Casual contact,

such as touching or hugging, doesn't spread *C. auris*.

## Who is at risk for a *C. auris* infection?

You're more likely to get a *C. auris* infection if you:

- Are older
- Have a weakened immune system
- Have chronic illnesses, such as cancer or diabetes
- Have been treated with antibiotics in the past
- Have had a recent surgery
- Have had repeated or long stays in the hospital
- Have open wounds or sores
- Have tubes or drains in your body
- Recently got healthcare in a country where *C. auris* is more common

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

The most common symptoms of a *C. auris* infection are a fever of 100.4° F (38.0° C) or higher and chills that don't get better after treatment. Only a laboratory test can diagnose a *C. auris* infection.

## How is a *C. auris* infection treated?

*C. auris* infections are treated with a medication that the germ causing your infection isn't resistant to. Your healthcare provider will decide which medication(s) to give you based on where you have an infection.

## What isolation precautions are taken if I have a *C. auris* infection while I'm in the hospital?

Isolation precautions are steps we take to stop infections from spreading from

person to person. If you have a *C. auris* infection while you're in the hospital:

- You'll be moved to a private room.
- A sign will be posted on your door telling all staff and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before going into your room.
- All staff and visitors will also need to wash their hands with soap and water after leaving your room.
- All staff and visitors will need to wear a yellow gown and gloves while in your room. These are available outside of your room and should be thrown away inside your room.
- If you leave your room for tests, you must wear a yellow gown and gloves or be covered with a clean sheet.
- If you leave your room to walk around the unit, you must wear a yellow gown and gloves.
- You won't be able to go to the following areas of the hospital:
  - Pantry on your unit
  - The Charles Hallac Patient Recreation Center on M15
  - Pediatric recreation area on M9
  - The Teen Lounge (TYA Lounge) on M14
  - Cafeteria
  - Main lobby
  - Any other public area of the hospital
- You can have art or massage therapy in your room while following isolation precautions.

## **What precautions should I take at home if I have a *C. auris* infection?**

Be sure to do the following at home:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the bathroom.
- Wash your hands after having contact with blood, urine, or drainage from a wound.
- Use a bleach-based disinfectant, such as Clorox® or Lysol®, to wipe any surfaces that may have come into contact with the fungus, such as a doorknob.

## Where can I get more information about C. auris?

If you have any questions, talk with your healthcare provider. You can also visit the following website for more information:

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

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

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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