

# Infection Prevention and You



## ***Candida auris*—A new threat to patients**

### **Why is *Candida auris* considered a worldwide health threat?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an alert to healthcare providers because patients in several countries have been infected with *Candida auris*, a yeast that can lead to invasive diseases.

*Candida auris* is concerning public health officials for three reasons:

1. This strain is multidrug-resistant, meaning there are only limited types of drugs that can treat this infection.
2. It has a high death rate in hospitalized patients and spreads quickly.
3. It can be hard to diagnose in the standard hospital laboratory; this means that cases could be missed and untreated.

### **Where has *Candida auris* been found?**

*Candida auris* has affected hospitalized patients in more than a dozen countries on five continents since 2009. It was first detected in the U.S. in 2016.

### **How does *Candida auris* spread?**

Although scientists are still studying the way this germ spreads, it appears to occur primarily in hospitalized patients. People traveling to countries where *Candida auris* has been found are not at increased risk. Within hospitals, the germ appears to be spread from contaminated surfaces and equipment, like blood pressure cuffs, and from person to person.

### **What types of complications are caused by *Candida auris*?**

One of the first infections reported with *Candida auris* was an ear infection. It can also cause bloodstream infections and wound infections. It can be found in respiratory secretions and urine, but scientists don't yet know if this leads to infections in the bladder or lungs.

### **Who is at risk?**

Patients with diabetes mellitus, patients who have had a recent surgery, patients who have recently taken antibiotics or antifungal drugs, and patients who have a special type of intravenous catheter are at increased risk for *Candida auris* infections.

### **What are hospitals and healthcare providers doing to stop the spread of *Candida auris*?**

The CDC recommends taking specific actions to prevent the spread of *Candida auris*:

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- Before and after coming into contact with hospitalized patients, staff and visitors should clean their hands at all appropriate times.
- Staff and visitors should wear personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, gowns) before they go into hospitalized patients' rooms.
- Surfaces and equipment should be disinfected with a chemical that can kill fungi.
- Staff and visitors should cover their coughs and sneezes with their elbows.

## Why is CDC concerned about *Candida auris* infections?

CDC is concerned about *Candida auris* for three main reasons:

1. It is often multidrug-resistant, meaning that it is resistant to multiple antifungal drugs commonly used to treat *Candida* infections.
2. It is difficult to identify with standard laboratory methods, and it can be misidentified in labs without specific technology. Misidentification may lead to inappropriate management.
3. It has caused outbreaks in healthcare settings. For this reason, rapid identification of *Candida auris* in a hospitalized patient is particularly important so that healthcare facilities can take special precautions to stop its spread.

The CDC is working with public health departments, hospitals, and laboratories to identify and prevent the spread of *Candida auris*.

## Additional resources

- The CDC—Clinical Alert to U.S. Healthcare Facilities - Global Emergence of Invasive Infections Caused by the Multidrug-Resistant Yeast *Candida auris* <http://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/candidiasis/candida-auris-alert.html>
- The CDC—*Candida auris* questions and answers <http://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/candidiasis/candida-auris-ganda.html>
- The CDC—*Candida auris* case counts <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/candidiasis/candida-auris.html>
- GOV.UK—The characteristics, diagnosis and management of *Candida auris* (*C. auris*). <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/candida-auris>

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