

|  |
| --- |
| *Candida auris (C. auris)* |
| Information for patients and visitors |

## What is *Candida auris*?

Candida is a family of fungi (yeasts) that live on the skin and inside the human body. *Candida auris* (also called *C. auris*) is an uncommon fungus that can cause serious infections. The types of infections caused by *C. auris* are no different from those caused by other types of Candida, however, we are particularly concerned about *C. auris* because it can be more difficult to treat than other Candida infections. It can also spread more easily to other patients.

## How do you get *C. auris*?

In Australia, *C. auris* infection is rare. All of the cases found in Australia to date have had admissions to hospitals overseas where there are many more cases of this fungus.

In most cases, patients carry the fungus somewhere on their body without it causing any symptoms or an infection. This is called colonisation. People who are colonised with *C. auris* may not know they have it and can pass the fungus to another person. It can spread via equipment that has been shared between patients or through contamination of the environment.

*C. auris* is not spread through the air by coughing or sneezing.

## Why is *C. auris* a problem?

*Candida auris* is a problem because:

* it causes serious infections
* it can be difficult to treat as it is often resistant to many medicines used to treat infections
* it is difficult to identify
* it can cause outbreaks in hospitals and nursing homes.

## Will *C. auris* make me unwell?

In most people *C. auris* is harmless and does not cause infection. However in some people, such as those whose immune system is weak or compromised,   
*C. auris* can become a serious problem. It may cause serious bloodstream, wound or ear infections.

## Is there treatment for *C. auris*?

Most *C. auris* infections are treatable with antifungal drugs called echinocandins. However, some *C. auris* infections have been resistant to all three main types of antifungal medications, making them more difficult to treat.

In this situation, multiple antifungals at high doses may be required to treat the infection. Your doctor will provide more specific information regarding any treatment you may require.

## **What will happen if I have** *C. auris***?**

If you are found to have *C. auris*, your healthcare team will continue to provide the same level of care. However, the following extra precautions will be taken while you are in hospital to prevent the spread of *C. auris*.

* You will be moved to a single room and a sign will be placed on your door to remind health care workers who enter your room about the special precautions, e.g., to wear a gown and gloves.
* Everyone, including your visitors and you, will need to wash their hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub before entering or leaving your room.
* Your visitors will be asked not to visit any other patients in hospital immediately after visiting you.
  + An alert will be placed in your hospital record to alert staff if you are admitted another time that extra precautions are required.

If you go to another healthcare facility, healthcare provider (e.g. doctor or physiotherapist) or have home care services, you need to tell them that you have *C. auris*. Take your discharge summary with you. There is no need to inform other community-based facilities or businesses that are not healthcare-related (e.g. public swimming pool).

Patients with a *C. auris* infection will usually be treated with antifungal medicines. No special treatment is required for patients found to be carrying *C. auris* without any symptoms or signs of infection.

## If I have *C. auris*, can I have visitors?

Your family and friends can visit you. However, to prevent the spread of *C. auris* to other patients or the environment, it is important that all your visitors always perform hand hygiene before entering and leaving your room.

Do not eat or drink in your room.

Do not use your hospital bathroom.

## What will happen when I go home?

There is no need to take special precautions at home, but it is important that you and your family remember to follow these good general hygiene practices.

Always wash your hands with soap and water

* + - After going to the toilet
    - Before preparing and eating food
    - Before and after touching any wounds or medical devices that you may have

Use your own towels and face cloths. Do not share these items with other people.

Cover any skin wounds whenever possible.

No special cleaning is required in your home and your clothing may be laundered 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.

## Can I do anything to help prevent the spread of *C. auris*?

Where possible, patients should avoid touching any areas of broken skin or wound dressings and ensure they wash their hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub, particularly after using the toilet, before eating food and whenever you leave your hospital room.

Visitors should also continue to practice good hand hygiene and ensure they wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand rub before and after touching patients or any items around the bedside.

Disclaimer: This health information is for general purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for you.

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone Communicable Disease Prevention and Control on 1300 651 160, using the National Relay Service   
13 36 77 if required, or email infectious.diseases@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

© State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, August 2018.

Adapted from: CDC (2017) *Candida auris: A drug-resistant germ that spreads in healthcare facilities*