WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT of HEALTH SERVICES

Infection Preventionist Lunch and Learn

Tuesday, May 12, 2026

Ashley O'Keefe, MLS(ASCP) CM, CIC, CDIPC

Series Objectives

- Encourage learning, growth, and networking
- Provide non-regulatory education and information
- Discuss topics relevant to new infection preventionists (IPs)

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT of HEALTH SERVICES

A Primer for *Candida auris*

Fundamentals on a Concerning Fungal Pathogen

Greta Starr
Infection Preventionist
Wisconsin Healthcare-Associated Infections Prevention Program

6/9/2026

Disclaimer

- The Wisconsin HAI Prevention Program is non-regulatory.
- There is no affiliation with any facilities or products.
- All content is based on current guidance and best practices.

Agenda

- About *C. auris*.
- Increasing *C. auris* activity.
- Strategies to decrease risk of transmission.
- Additional resources.

Knowledge is power!

About C. *auris*

Did You Know?

C. auris is a **multidrug-resistant yeast.**

Did You Know?

Different **clades** of *C. auris* have been detected.

Did You Know?

C. *auris* has a noteworthy **mortality rate**.

Did You Know?

Once **infected or colonized** with C. auris, the individual is considered to have it indefinitely.

Did You Know?

C. *auris* can survive on both **biotic and abiotic** surfaces.

Did You Know?

C. auris is **transmitted by contact**.

Did You Know?

C. *auris* is also known as ***Candidozyma auris.***

A Timeline…

C. *auris* was initially detected in Asia in 2009 from an ear infection.

C. *auris* began spreading in the United States in 2015.

C. *auris* was first detected in Wisconsin in a specimen collected in December 2021.

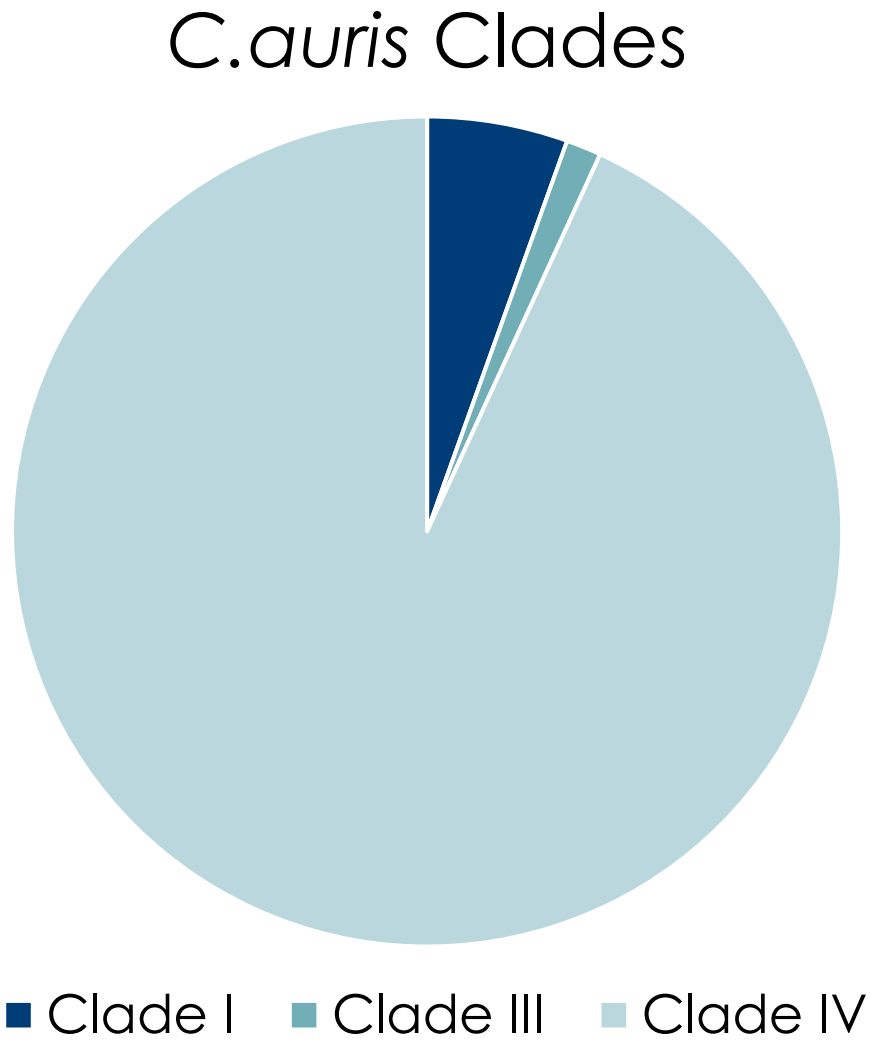
C. auris General Information

- CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), About *C. auris*
- CDC, Preventing the Spread of *C. auris*
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), *Candida auris*: Information for health care settings
- DHS, Multidrug-Resistant Organisms: Fact sheet for patients, residents, and families
- DHS, Multidrug-Resistant Organisms: Information for health care settings

Increasing C. *auris* activity

C. auris Data

Year	Case count
2022	5
2023	21
2024	25
2025	41



Shifting Trends...

Cases can be detected more quickly.

Transmission is occurring within Wisconsin.

Cases detection has expanded.

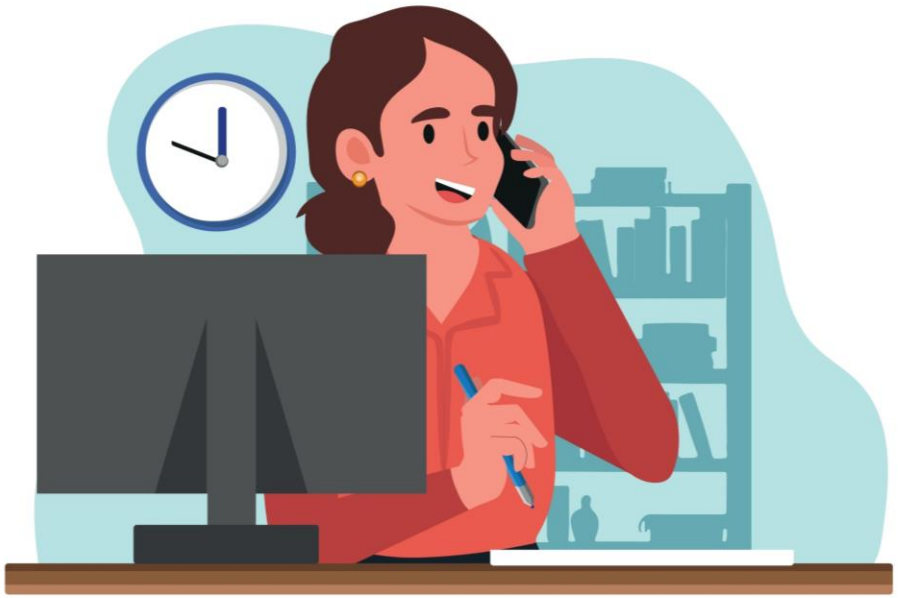
Why is this significant?

C. auris Data Resources

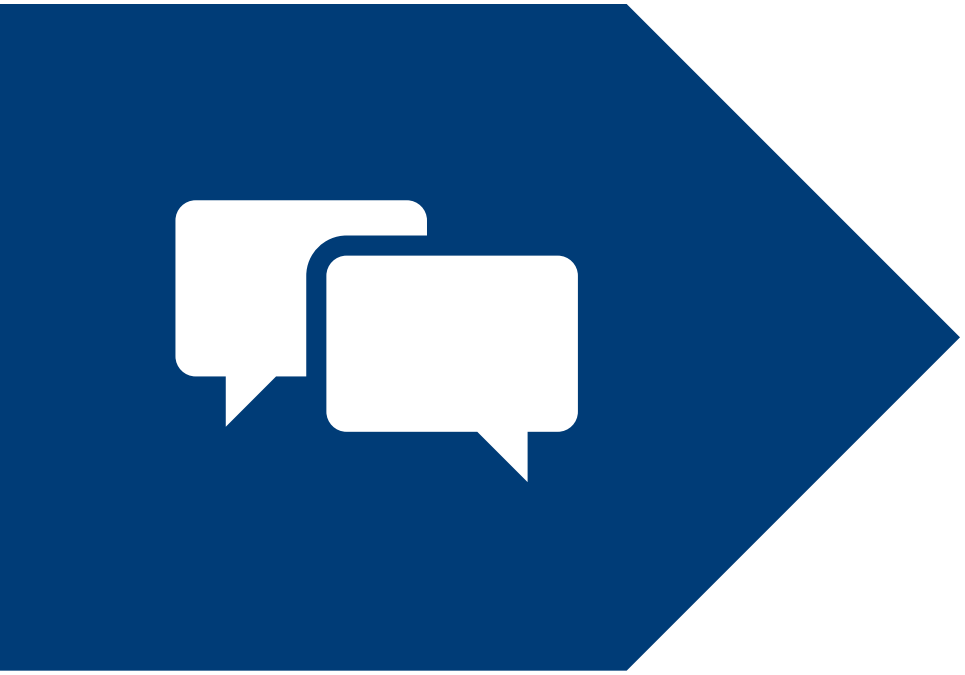
- CDC, Tracking *C. auris*
- DHS, Wisconsin Communicable Disease Surveillance Data
- DHS, Healthcare-Associated Infections: Reportable Multidrug-Resistant Organisms

Strategies to Decrease Risk of Transmission

You Can Help!



Communicate

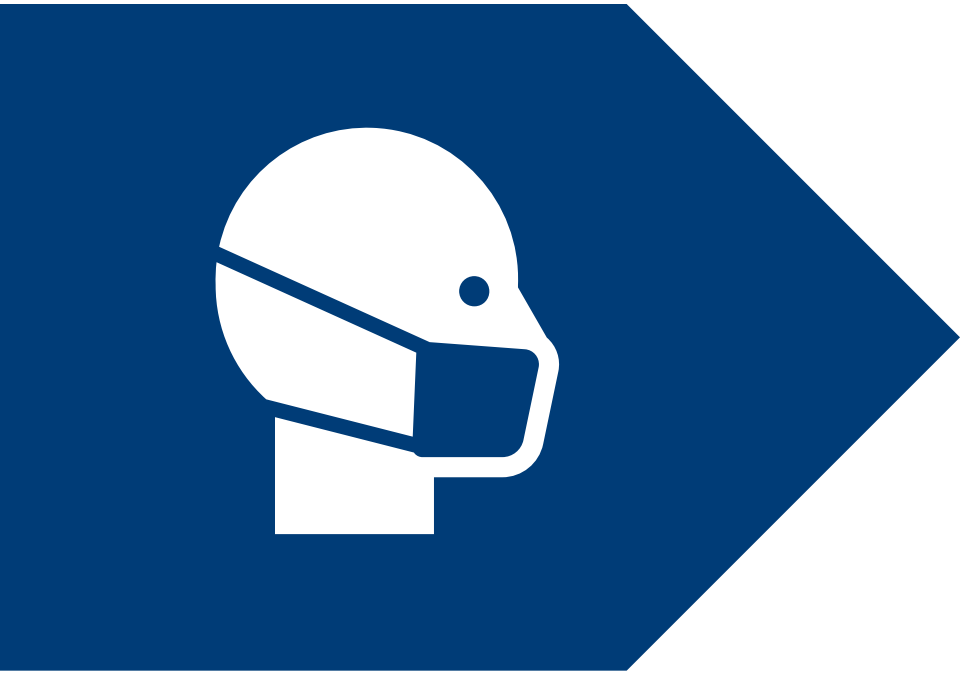


- Flag the electronic health record.
- Implement a process for communicating *C. auris* status on transfer.
- Do not decline admissions based on *C. auris* status alone.

Communication Resources

- DHS, Health Care Facility Transfer Form
- DHS, Wisconsin HAI Education Series Webinar: MDROs and Transition of Care

Use Precautions



- Use standard precautions.


Hand hygiene
Personal protective equipment (PPE)
Respiratory hygiene
Environmental cleaning
Laundry
Injections
Placement
Standard precautions

Use Precautions

- Use standard precautions.
- Use the recommended precautions for your setting.

Contact Precautions

Contact precautions are used temporarily for acute signs or symptoms of a multidrug-resistant organism (MDRO) infection. Contact precautions requires the **use of gown and gloves** prior to room entry.

Enhanced Barrier Precautions (EBPs)

EBPs are designed to reduce the spread of MDROs by expanding the use of gloves and gowns during high-contact resident care activities **in nursing homes**, especially for those at increased risk of acquiring or spreading a MDRO.

Use Precautions

- Use standard precautions.
- Use the recommended precautions for your setting.
- Choose roommates wisely.

Precautions Resources

- CDC, Implementation of PPE Use in Nursing Homes to Prevent Spread of MDROs
- CDC, FAQs about Enhanced Barrier Precautions in Nursing Homes
- CDC, Transmission-Based Precautions
- CDC, Standard Precautions for All Patient Care
- DHS, Healthcare-Associated Infections: Precautions

Clean and Disinfect

- Have the right disinfectants.
- Use disinfectants correctly.
- Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfection.
- Save transmission-based precautions room(s) for last.
- Manage reusable equipment and shared spaces.

Cleaning and Disinfection Resources

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Registered Antimicrobial Products Effective Against Candida auris [List P]
- DHS, Disinfectant Considerations for MDROs
- DHS, MDROs: Cleaning and disinfection in health care facilities
- DHS, Environmental Services Infection Prevention and Control Playbook

Perform Hand Hygiene

- Have hand hygiene supplies readily available.
- Educate, observe, and encourage hand hygiene.

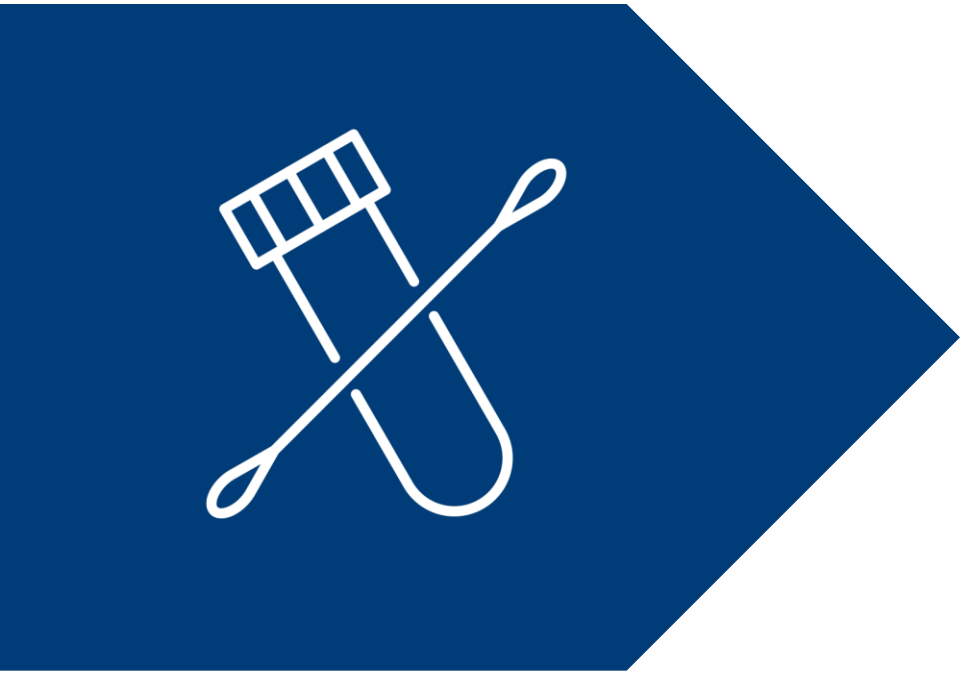
Hand Hygiene Resources

- CDC, Clinical Safety: Hand Hygiene for Healthcare Workers
- CDC, About Hand Hygiene for Patients in Healthcare Settings
- DHS, Hand Hygiene Observation Tracking Workbook
- DHS, Handwashing

Conduct Screening

Colonization screening is performed to determine the extent of spread of an MDRO in a facility.

Conduct Screening



Screening can help inform infection prevention and control (IPC)decision-making and improve MDRO communication across the care continuum.

Conduct Screening

- Conduct response-driven screening, if appropriate.
- Consider admission screening, depending on your care setting.

Colonization Screening Resources

- CDC, Interim Guidance for a Public Health Response to Contain Novel or Targeted MDROs
- CDC, Public Health Strategies to Prevent the Spread of Novel and Targeted MDROs
- DHS, MDRO Colonization Screening: FAQs for health care facilities

Colonization Screening Resources

- DHS, MDRO Colonization Screening: FAQs for Residents, Patients, and Families
- DHS, Be an MDRO Champion!

Additional Resources

Guidance Documents

- DHS, Guidelines for Prevention and Control of Multidrug-Resistant Organisms for Health Care Settings, P-42513 (PDF)
- DHS, Recommendations for Prevention and Control of Targeted Multidrug-Resistant Organisms in Wisconsin Nursing Homes, P-03250 (PDF)

Guidance Documents

- DHS, Recommendations for Prevention and Control of Targeted Multidrug-Resistant Organisms for Assisted Living Facilities, P-03250a (PDF)
- DHS, Recommendations for Prevention and Control of Targeted Multidrug-Resistant Organisms for Prison and Jail Settings, P-03250b (PDF)

Reporting and Health Department Resources

- DHS, Communicable Disease Case Reporting and Investigation Protocol: *Candida auris*
- DHS, WEDSS Surveillance and Response for Targeted Multidrug-Resistant Organisms: Wisconsin Protocol for Local and Tribal Health Departments, P-03263 (PDF)
- DHS, Reportable MDRO Follow-Up Reference Guide for Local and Tribal Health Departments, P-03263a (PDF)

MDRO Office Hours

MDRO office hours is an opportunity for health care and public health partners to connect, ask questions, and learn about MDROs and related topics. Each quarter we will provide case counts and review infection prevention and control trends.

Reportable MDRO Webpage

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT of HEALTH SERVICES

I'm

About DHS | Data & Statistics | Diseases & Conditions | Health Care & Coverage | Long-Term Care & Support | Prevention & Healthy Living | For Partners & Providers | Certification, Licenses & Permits

Home › For Partners & Providers › Healthcare-Associated Infections: Resources for Health Professionals › Healthcare-Associated Infections: Reportable Multidrug-Resistant Organisms

- HAI: Home
- For Health Professionals
- For Patients & Families
- Infection Prevention Education
- Infection Preventionist Starter Kit
- **Multidrug-Resistant Organisms**
- Precautions
- HAI Data
- National Healthcare Safety Network
- Antimicrobial Stewardship

Healthcare-Associated Infections: Reportable Multidrug-Resistant Organisms

Multidrug-resistant organisms (MDROs) are an ongoing threat to patient health and safety. The potential for rapid spread in health care facilities and difficulties of treating infections make it critically important for public health to conduct surveillance across settings and promote aggressive infection control measures.

According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), more than 2.8 million antibiotic resistant infections (PDF) occur in the U.S. each year and more than 35,000 people die from them.

This webpage lists the **MDROs that are currently reportable in Wisconsin** as well as prevention, surveillance, testing, and reporting resources for health care facilities and local and Tribal health departments (LTHDS).

What are MDROs?

MDROs are microorganisms, mainly bacteria, that are resistant to one or more classes of antimicrobial agents (antibiotics and antifungals). This means these antimicrobials can no longer be used to control or kill the microorganism. Infections caused by MDROs can be difficult to treat due to limited treatment options and have the ability to spread rapidly, especially in health care settings.

There are many different MDROs, and some are of more concern than others, such as carbapenemase-producing organisms (CPOs). CPOs are particularly worrisome as carbapenemase enzymes can inactivate carbapenem antibiotics, as well as other beta-lactam antibiotics. Moreover, some CPOs can transfer this ability to inactivate carbapenem antibiotics to other bacteria, which can lead to the spread of antibiotic resistance.

The potential for rapid spread, increasing antibiotic resistance, and difficulty treating infections caused by these organisms,

Contact Information

Greta Starr


Greta.Starr@dhs.wisconsin.gov


608-867-4647

Questions?

IP Starter Kit

- Interactive, web-based resource
- Background information, resources, and templates
- Covers topics applicable to IPs across care settings

HAI Prevention Program Contacts

Email: dhswihaipreventionprogram@dhs.wisconsin.gov

Phone: 608-267-7711

Website: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/hai/contacts.htm

Send your questions and topic suggestions.

Submit your ideas to Ashley O'Keefe at ashley.okeefe@dhs.wisconsin.gov.

Upcoming Lunch and Learn Session

No July IP Lunch and Learn Session

Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2026

Topic: Immunizations