

Candida auris

Factsheet for Health Care Settings



Candida auris (*C. auris*) is a rare but potentially life-threatening type of fungus that is resistant to most antifungal medications. According to CDC's "[Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States](#)" report published in 2019, *C. auris* was first identified in 2009 and has since been found in many countries around the world, including the United States.

The number of cases of *C. auris* in the U.S. has been increasing in recent years. According to CDC's "[Tracking Candida auris](#)" webpage, cases have been identified in many states in the Midwest. As of January 2022, one case of *C. auris* has been identified in a Wisconsin resident.



How is *C. auris* spread?

C. auris can spread in health care settings when someone touches a surface that has *C. auris* on it, or from person-to-person. Handwashing and thorough cleaning in health care facilities is important because this fungus can live on surfaces for several weeks.



Who is at risk for *C. auris*?

Healthy individuals do not usually get sick from *C. auris*. Individuals with longer hospital or long-term care facility stays, open wounds, tracheostomies, or invasive devices like ventilators or urinary catheters, are at risk for infection with *C. auris*.



How are infections with *C. auris* treated?

- ▶ Most *C. auris* infections can be treated with a type of antifungal drug called echinocandins.
- ▶ However, some *C. auris* infections have been found to be resistant to all three main types of antifungal medications, making them harder to treat. In that situation, multiple types of antifungal medications at high doses may be needed to treat the infection.



Why is *C. auris* prevention important?

- ▶ Infections caused by *C. auris* are difficult to treat and are associated with increased mortality and high health care costs.
- ▶ It can be difficult to eliminate *C. auris* once it is found in a facility, since the organism can live on surfaces in the environment.



What can health care facilities do to prevent the spread of *C. auris*?

Careful attention to infection prevention measures, such as hand hygiene, the proper use of gowns and gloves, thorough environmental cleaning, and use of dedicated equipment and supplies can help reduce the risk of transmission within health care facilities.



- ▶ **Practice consistent hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ABHS) or soap and water.**
 - ▶ Staff should perform hand hygiene **before and after** changing dressings, providing patient or resident care (such as bathing, dressing, or changing linen), and accessing indwelling devices.
 - ▶ Staff should also perform hand hygiene before preparing or eating food, and after using the bathroom.
 - ▶ Patients and residents should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene often.



- ▶ **Increase the frequency of environmental cleaning and disinfection, especially for high-touch surfaces.** Consult EPA's "[List P: Antimicrobial Products Registered with EPA for Claims Against Candida Auris](#)" regarding appropriate cleaning products to use when *C. auris* is present in a facility.

- ▶ **Whenever possible, use single-use, disposable, non-critical equipment or dedicate equipment to one patient or resident.**

Thoroughly clean and disinfect all patient and resident care equipment after use.



- ▶ **Follow appropriate precautions and ensure personal protective equipment (PPE) is used properly.**
 - ▶ The type of precautions that should be used with patients and residents will depend on a number of factors, including whether an individual is colonized or infected with a targeted multidrug-resistant organism (MDRO) or has indwelling medical devices or wounds.
 - ▶ Health care personnel must understand what type of precautions should be followed, and have access to the appropriate PPE to keep themselves and others safe.
 - ▶ Using appropriate precautions may also involve placing residents who are infected or colonized with a targeted MDRO in a private room.
 - ▶ For more information on the type of precautions that should be used see the below resources:
 - ◆ [CDC Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Settings. Appendix A](#)
 - ◆ [CDC information on Enhanced Barrier Precautions in Nursing Homes](#)



- ▶ **Facilities should clearly communicate a patient's or resident's MDRO status when an individual is transferred to or receives care at another health care facility.**

When an individual who is colonized or infected with an MDRO is transferred to another health care facility, leaves the facility for an outpatient clinic visit, or receives ancillary services, the receiving facility must be informed of the individual's MDRO status, so that proper precautions can be taken in those settings.

For more information, visit the [Wisconsin Healthcare-Associated Infections Prevention Program's webpage](#).

