

Screening for *Candida auris* and Carbapenemase Producing Germs for Inpatients at the MVAHCS

What are we screening for?

- Carbapenemase producing germs (CPOs). You may also see Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacterales (CRE) when looking at other information.
- *Candida auris* (*C. auris*)

These germs are often hard to treat because they are resistant to multiple drugs. They can also spread easily between patients if steps are not taken ahead of time.

How are these germs spread?

- By touching the skin or infection site of another person who is colonized or infected with the organism
- By touching an environmental surface or medical device that is contaminated with CPO/*C. auris* (such as a countertop, door handle, bed rail, or phone)

Why are we screening?

C. auris and CPO frequently cause severe infections, spread easily between patients, and can be hard to treat. Identifying these germs early can help prevent their spread. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends healthcare facility screen for these germs. If you recently received health care in another country or healthcare facility, you may have a higher risk of getting CPO/*C. auris*. The Minnesota Department of Health and CDC recommend that all patients who were hospitalized internationally within the last 12 months or who have been hospitalized/received care in in areas with evidence of spread of these germs (including long-term care/nursing homes) be screened for CPO and *C. auris*.

Who is tested?

The Minneapolis VA screens veterans who have been hospitalized or received surgery or hemodialysis outside of the US or Canada within the last 12 months. Veterans will also be screened if they have been admitted to a hospital or skilled nursing facility in states with evidence of spread of these germs in the last 12 months. When you're admitted you will be asked screening questions. If you answer yes to either of these questions you will be placed in a private room on contact precautions and will be tested. If your test comes back negative, these precautions may be removed.

How do we test?

Testing is done by obtaining samples from the rectum and armpit. One paired swab is inserted into the rectum and gently rotated to collect a specimen. A second paired swab is gently rolled several times in one armpit to collect the specimen. Both paired swabs are then sent to the Minnesota Department of Health for processing. It takes about 2-3 days to process the results, and your provider will communicate your results to you.

What if your test comes back positive?

You will remain in a private room with contact precautions. Staff will continue to wear additional PPE (personal protective equipment), such as isolation gowns and gloves, when they work with you to prevent the spread of CPO/*C. auris* to others.

What are benefits of being tested?

First, knowing that you have CPO/*C. auris* can help you make informed decisions about the healthcare you receive and empower you to protect your loved ones by taking steps to minimize your risk for spreading the germs such as regularly washing your hands. Second, this information can help your healthcare team provide safe care to you by using appropriate PPE. This is important because it prevents the spread of CPO/*C. auris* to other patients.

How can the spread of CPO/*C. auris* be stopped?

- By healthcare personnel, patients, and visitors performing consistent hand hygiene/hand washing.
- By implementing infection control practices for patients who screen positive.
- By having Environmental Management Services (housekeeping) perform timely cleaning and disinfection of patient care areas impacted by these germs with the correct supplies
- By minimizing device use (e.g., urinary catheters, ventilators, IVs) when possible
- By using antibiotics wisely and only when needed (i.e., practicing *Antimicrobial Stewardship* by prescribing antibiotics in a responsible way)
- By ensuring medical devices and instruments are properly decontaminated and disinfected after each use and when moved out of a patient's room.

References

If you want more information please consider the following resources.

Hospital Admission Screening for CPO and *C. auris* Colonization - MN Dept. of Health (state.mn.us): <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/candidiasis/auris/hcp/screen.html>

Frequently Asked Questions about Admission Screening for CPO and *C. auris* Colonization:
Shortened link to state.mn.us: <https://bit.ly/3TI9OBo>