

# Understanding Candida Auris Infection



Candida auris (C. auris) is a type of fungus. It can live on surfaces and objects, and can grow on people. If it grows too much in a person, it can make them sick.

People with other severe health problems are most at risk of severe illness from a C. auris infection. A severe infection can be life threatening. Healthy people are less likely to be sick. But they can carry the fungus. This is called colonization. A person who is colonized by C. auris can spread it to others.

C. auris has been spreading over time. The CDC is concerned about this fungus, and is working with health officials to watch it closely. There are different types (strains). Each is resistant to some or all of the 3 types of medicines used to treat fungal infections. This makes it hard to treat.

## What causes C. auris infection?

C. auris spreads from person to person. It also spreads to people from surfaces and objects they touch. It can spread easily in healthcare buildings such as hospitals and nursing homes.

It can spread from person to person by contact with any of these:

- Infected skin
- Fluid that comes from wounds
- Mucus you sneeze or cough up

C. auris is more likely to make a person sick if they have any of these:

- A weak immune system such as from blood cancer or diabetes
- Treatment with a lot of antibiotics
- An IV tube
- A bladder catheter
- A feeding tube
- A breathing tube
- Recent surgery

## Clean your hands

Cleaning your hands is the best way to prevent spreading C. auris. Wash your hands with clean, running water and soap. Or use a hand cleaner that has alcohol.

## Symptoms

The most common symptoms are fever and chills that don't get better with antibiotic medicine.

Other symptoms can depend on what part of the body is infected. For example, C. auris can infect a wound or the ear. It can infect the blood or the heart. The symptoms can be like other types of illness.

## Diagnosis

It can be hard to tell if a person has *C. auris*. Diagnosing may be done with a blood test. Or a cotton swab is wiped on part of the body where *C. auris* may be growing. In some cases, a small piece of tissue from an infected site may be taken.

The blood, swab, or tissue is then tested in a lab with special technology. Not all labs are able to test for *C. auris*. The swab may need to be sent to a lab with the right technology. The results can take 5 days up to 1-2 weeks.

## Treatment

*C. auris* infection is treated with antifungal medicine. The medicine may be given through an IV in your hand or arm. You may be given this medicine every day for several weeks. Your healthcare team will tell you more about what to expect with your treatment.

If you have *C. auris* infection in a healthcare facility, the staff will also take steps to make sure you don't spread the fungus. When caring for you, they may:

- Wear protective clothing like medical gloves, gowns, and caps
- Clean your room more often with special cleaning products
- Have your visitors wash their hands after touching anything in the room

## What is *C. auris* colonization?

Colonization is different from infection. It means that *C. auris* is on your body, but it's not making you sick. But you can spread it to other people. And you can spread it to surfaces you touch.

Your body may be colonized after being treated for a *C. auris* infection. Or you may be colonized and have no symptoms of infection.

Colonization can last for as long as 2 years or more. There is no approved way to treat it yet. Researchers are still learning about it. The fungus may make you sick later. Or you may never get sick from it.

If you are colonized with *C. auris*, take extra care not to spread it to other people.

- Wash your hands around others or use a hand cleaner that has alcohol.
- Wipe off objects before handing them to others. This includes cell phones.
- Before you plan to go to a healthcare building, tell the staff that you are colonized with *C. auris*. They can tell you what steps to take to protect others. You may need to wear gloves or wash your hands often.

## Possible complications of *C. auris* infection

*C. auris* can cause a serious infection of the blood, heart, or brain. It can lead to organ failure. A serious infection can lead to death in some people.

## When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if you have these and they don't get better with antibiotic medicine:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your provider
- Chills

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