

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Candida auris: Information for Patients, Residents and Visitors

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Q1. What is *Candida auris*?

Candida auris (*C. auris*) is a type of fungus that can make people sick, especially those in hospitals or long-term care homes (LTCHs). It's harder to treat than other fungi because it doesn't always respond to the usual medicines. You may also hear about *Candidozyma auris* – it is the same thing as *Candida auris*.

Q2. How does *C. auris* spread?

It mainly spreads through hands or touching surfaces that have *C. auris* on them. It can survive on surfaces for at least two weeks and is hard to kill with some commonly used cleaners in hospitals and LTCHs. It can also be difficult to clean from surfaces which makes it easy to spread in healthcare settings.

Cleaning your hands is the best way to stop the spread of *C. auris*.

You should clean your hands:

- Before and after eating
- After using the washroom
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
- When entering or leaving a patient/resident room
- Before and after group activities

Follow handwashing signs and instructions provided by staff.

Q3. Who is at risk?

C. auris mostly affects people who are already sick and receiving medical care in hospitals or LTCHs. People who are healthy or live in the community are not likely to get it. Those at highest risk usually have medical devices like catheters or feeding tubes or need complex care.

Q4. What is the treatment for *C. auris*?

Treatment for *C. auris* depends on whether you have an infection or you are colonized. If you are infected with *C. auris*, this means the fungus has entered your body and is causing damage and making you sick. The symptoms you get will be related to the site of the infection (e.g., if you have a skin infection you may experience redness, warmth and pus). You will be treated to cure the infection. If you are colonized, *C. auris* is on your body but not making you sick and you won't need any treatment. You may remain colonized with *C. auris* even if your infection is cured.

Q5. How long will I have *C. auris*?

It varies. Some people get rid of it in a few weeks or months, while others may be colonized for years.

Q6. Should I get re-tested to find out if it's gone?

Re-testing is not currently recommended in the hospital or LTCH, and special precautions will stay in place as long as you're admitted, including staff and visitors wearing PPE when caring for you. These precautions are not needed once you go home.

Q7. Can I still have visitors?

Yes, patients and residents with *C. auris* can still have visitors. Visitors will need to clean their hands when they enter and before they leave your room and may be required to wear gowns and gloves during their visit. Visitors should not use the bathrooms of patient and residents.

Q8. Can I still participate in therapy sessions and social activities?

In hospitals, patients will need to stay in their rooms unless they are going for necessary medical procedures. These are often scheduled last in the day to allow for extra cleaning of the procedure room.

In LTCHs, residents can still take part in therapies and social activities, but will need to:

- Wash hands before and after activities, and at the times listed in Question 2 (Q2) above.
- Wear clean clothes
- Keep any wounds or drainage covered

Group therapies like physiotherapy may instead be done one-on-one.

Q9. How will my care change if I have *C. auris*?

You will still receive safe high-quality care. You may be placed in a private room with your own washroom. Staff or visitors may wear gowns and gloves when caring for you or visiting. Follow posted signs and instructions provided by staff. Hospitals and LTCHs should not refuse to admit you because you have *C. auris*.

Staff will clean any surfaces you touch and may schedule the use of shared spaces like showers or therapy for the end of the day.

The same precautions are followed for both infection and colonization with *C. auris*.

Q10. How can I get more information about *C. auris*?

You can talk to your doctor, nurse, or healthcare provider if you have questions or would like more information.

References

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