

Multi-drug Resistant (MDR) *Candida auris* Fact Sheet for Patients and Families (Acute Care)

How to prevent the spread of infection in hospital and home

Candida auris (*C. auris*) is a fungus that was discovered in 2009 and has spread to countries all over the world. *C. auris* is difficult to identify in the laboratory, it may be misidentified unless special tests are used.

C. auris can cause serious infections and is difficult to treat. *C. auris* is called 'multi-drug resistant (MDR)' because antifungal medications that are used to treat *Candida* infections often don't work. It is important to prevent the spread of this fungus to others.

C. auris is known to spread in healthcare facilities through contact with affected patients and contaminated surfaces or equipment. Most people who get serious *C. auris* infections are already sick from other medical conditions.

This fact sheet explains why you may be tested for *C. auris*, and how spread of *C. auris* can be prevented in the hospital and at home.

Why am I being tested for *C. auris*?

Because *C. auris* can cause serious infection in some people, we may test you even though you do not show signs of infection. We test individuals located close to a room where a person who tested positive for *C. auris* has been.

The screening test usually involves two swabs, one axilla (underarm) swab and one rectal or groin swab. A small cotton swab is put under the arm, into the rectum, or into the folds of the groin rotated gently, and removed. The sample is sent to the laboratory for testing. It can take a few days for test results to come back.

What does it mean if my test is positive for *C. auris*?

If you test positive, but you do not have signs or symptoms of infection, Health Care Providers say this individual is 'colonized'. 'Colonized' means you do not have an infection and you are not sick. Most people who carry *C. auris* never get sick from it. If you do get sick, knowing you carry this fungus will help make treatment decisions.

If you have a *C. auris* infection, you will be treated with antifungal medications. Talk to your health care provider for more information about your treatment options.



In the Hospital

If the laboratory identifies *C. auris* from one of your samples, we will place you on isolation to prevent spread to other patients.

Isolation means:

- Nursing staff will place an isolation sign on the door of your room.
- Health Care Providers do hand hygiene and put on a gown and gloves over their clothing before entering the room to take care of you.
- Family and visitors do hand hygiene and put on a gown and gloves over their clothing before entering your room
- We ask you to use your own toilet or commode (toilet on wheels) and wash your hands after use.
- You should not share your toilet or commode with other patients or visitors.
- Health care providers and visitors remove their gloves and gowns, and do hand hygiene every time before they leave your room.

You can help us prevent further spread through the following:

- Clean your hands often with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water, especially before and after using the toilet, before and after eating or drinking, and before exiting and entering your room.
- Do not use the patient kitchen.
- Follow the Health Care Providers instructions before they take you to other areas of the hospital for treatment and tests needed for your care.
- Follow the Health Care Providers instructions to clean your hands before walking around outside your room, and by asking where and when you may walk.

At Home:

The risk to healthy household members is low. *C. auris* infection tends to occur in people who have other medical conditions. If you have *C. auris*, follow these instructions to prevent spreading to others in your home:

- Wash your hands often, especially after going to the bathroom and before preparing and eating food.
- People who live with you should wash their hands often.



- Do not share personal care items such as washcloths, towels, toothbrushes or bar soap.
- Clean bathrooms and other frequently touched surfaces (for example, light switches, water tap and toilet handles) once per day followed by disinfection with a 1:9 bleach solution (1 part bleach to 9 parts water).
- Wash non-disposable cleaning cloths after each use.
- Cover open draining wounds with a clean dressing/bandage.
- Advise anyone helping with your personal care (e.g., dressing changes) to wear disposable gloves.

If you have to return to the hospital:

- Tell the nurse or doctor that you are a carrier of *C. auris*.

