

## ***Candida auris***

### **What is *Candida auris* ?**

*Candida auris* is a pathogenic fungus that can cause serious infections and illness, predominantly in hospitalized patients. *C. auris* only recently appeared in the United States, and no cases have been identified in Louisiana.

### **What are the symptoms of illness caused by *C. auris*?**

*C. auris* is frequently misidentified. Patients with *C. auris* infection exhibit symptoms depending on the part of the body affected, which means that symptoms vary widely from case to case.

### **How serious is infection with *C. auris* ?**

The seriousness of the disease cannot be underplayed. One in three patients with invasive *C. auris* (i.e. infection in blood, brain, heart, etc.) die.

### **How is *C. auris* spread?**

People can become infected in several ways,

- touching surfaces or objects contaminated with *C. auris*
- having direct contact with another person who is infected.

### **Who gets *C. auris* infection?**

*C. auris* has been commonly found in healthcare facilities and nursing homes. Outbreaks have been associated with spread via contact with infected patients and contaminated surfaces or instruments/equipment.

Similar to other healthcare-associated and invasive fungal infections, this disease disproportionately affects patients who require long-term care and those with underlying conditions, such as (but not limited to):

- patients who experience frequent or extended hospital stays
- individuals with diabetes or blood cancers
- patients who are dependent on medical devices like breathing/feeding tubes or vein/bladder catheters.

### **What treatment is available for people with *C. auris* infection?**

Specialized laboratory equipment is required to correctly isolate the species, in order to make the correct diagnosis and administer the appropriate treatment.

Additionally, *C. auris* is resistant to many types of antifungal medications, so treatment is difficult. A group of antifungals

known as echinocandins have been effective in treating patients with *C. auris*, but antifungal resistance has still been shown in some cases.

### **How do I know if I have *Candida auris* infection?**

Only a laboratory test can diagnose *C. auris*. Though *C. auris* is still rare in the U.S., people who get invasive *Candida* infections already have underlying conditions that affect the immune system.

The most common symptoms are fever and chills that don't improve after antibiotic treatment for a suspected bacterial infection. Talk to your healthcare provider if you believe you may be ill with a fungal or healthcare-associated infection.

### **Can *C. auris* infections be prevented?**

Family members and close contacts of patients with *C. auris* infection:

- Observe basic hand hygiene by washing your hands with soap and water before and after coming into contact with an infected patient or equipment in their room.
- Remind healthcare workers to observe basic hand hygiene.

Laboratory staff, healthcare workers, and public health officials:

- Know when to suspect *C. auris* and how to properly identify it.
- Report cases to the Louisiana Office of Public Health's Infectious Disease Epidemiology Section (IDEpi) immediately at (800) 256-2748.
- Ensure hand cleanliness and use precautions (e.g. wearing gowns and gloves) to prevent spread.
- Public health officials should consult all potential cases with the Mycotic Disease and Healthcare-Associated Infection Coordinators in IDEpi, as soon as possible.
- Check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website for the most up-to-date guidance on identifying and managing *C. auris* at <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/candidiasis/recommendations.html>.