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| *Candida auris* (*C. auris*) |
| Information for patients and visitors |
| OFFICIAL |

## What is *Candida auris*?

*Candida* is a family of fungi (yeasts) that live on the skin and inside the human body. *Candida auris* (also called *C. auris*) is an uncommon fungus that can cause serious infections.

Most people who carry the fungus on their body do not get sick from it, but sometimes it can lead to serious bloodstream, wound and ear infections. Infections caused by *C. auris* are concerning because they can be more difficult to treat than other *Candida* infections as they are often resistant to medicines used to treat these infections.

## How is *C. auris* spread?

*C. auris* is usually spread person to person through contact with hands or equipment with *C. auris* on them or from contaminated environmental surfaces.

*C. auris* is not spread through the air by coughing or sneezing.

## What will happen if I have *C. auris*?

If you are found to have *C. auris*, your healthcare team will continue to provide the same level of care. However, the following extra precautions may be taken while you are in hospital to prevent the spread of *C. auris*.

* You may be moved to a single room and a sign will be placed on your door to remind others who enter your room about the precautions, for example, to wear a gown and gloves.
* Everyone, including your visitors and you, should thoroughly wash their hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub before entering and leaving your room.
* An alert will be placed in your hospital record to alert staff if you are admitted at another time that extra precautions are required.

If you go to another healthcare facility, healthcare provider (for example, doctor or physiotherapist) or have home care services, tell them that you have *C. auris*. There is no need to inform other community-based facilities or businesses that are not healthcare-related (for example, public swimming pools).

## Will *C. auris* make me unwell?

In most people *C. auris* is harmless and does not cause infection. However, in some people, such as those whose immune system is weak or compromised, *C. auris* can become a serious problem. It may cause serious bloodstream, wound or ear infections.

Although healthy people do not usually get *C. auris* infections, it is important to know that people may carry the fungus somewhere on their body without it showing any symptoms. This is called colonisation.

## Is there treatment for *C. auris*?

Most *C. auris* infections are treatable with antifungal drugs called echinocandins. However, some *C. auris* infections have been resistant to most antifungal medications, making them more difficult to treat.

In this situation, multiple antifungals at high doses may be required to treat the infection. Your doctor will provide more specific information regarding any treatment you may require.

## If I have *C. auris*, can I have visitors?

Your family and friends can still visit you. However, to prevent the spread of *C. auris* to other patients or the environment, it is important that all your visitors always wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand rub before entering and when leaving your room.

Visitors should also not eat or drink in your room or use your hospital bathroom.

## Can I do anything to help prevent the spread of *C. auris*?

Where possible, you should avoid touching any areas of broken skin or wound dressings and ensure you use an alcohol-based hand rub or wash your hands with soap and water, particularly after using the toilet, before eating food and whenever you leave your hospital room.

Visitors should also continue to practice good hand hygiene and ensure they wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand rub before and after touching patients or any items around the bedside.

## What will happen when I go home?

There is no need to take special precautions at home, but it is important that you and your family remember to follow these good general hygiene practices.

* Always wash your hands with soap and water:
  + after going to the toilet
  + before preparing and eating food
  + before and after touching any wounds or medical devices that you may have.
* Use your own towels and face cloths. Do not share these items with other people.
* Cover any wounds whenever possible.

No special cleaning is required in your home and your clothing may be laundered in the usual manner, along with the rest of the household laundry. All eating utensils and dishes can be washed the way you usually do.

## Where can I get more information?

If you have any questions, the hospital’s infection prevention and control professional or the doctor or nurse looking after you or your family can help.

Information on *C. auris* is also available on the [Better Health Channel](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/Candida-auris) <www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/Candida-auris>.

Disclaimer: This health information is for general purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for you.

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