

Patient information factsheet

Information for patients who have been in contact with someone who has Candidozyma (Candida) auris

We have given you this factsheet because you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for *Candidozyma auris*. This factsheet explains what *Candidozyma auris* is, how it is spread, and how it is tested for in hospital. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your healthcare team.

What is *Candidozyma auris*?

Candidozyma auris (*C. auris*), formerly known as *Candida auris*, is a rare fungus that can lead to bloodstream, wound, and ear infections.

Candida is a family of fungi (yeasts) that live on the skin and inside the human body. *C. auris* is much less common than other types of *candida* such as *Candida albicans* which can cause yeast infections (thrush). Some people can be carriers of *C. auris* without realising it, if they have no symptoms and do not become unwell as a result. This is called colonisation.

However, *C. auris* can occasionally get into surgical wounds or the bloodstream. It can enter the body during medical treatment (for example, during operations or when urinary catheters or drips are inserted) and can cause serious or life-threatening infections that need treatment.

How is *C. auris* spread?

We don't yet know exactly how *C. auris* spreads, but it appears to spread from person-to-person in hospitals through:

- unwashed hands
- sharing a bay with someone who has *C. auris*
- contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment

To prevent the spread of *C. auris* we are:

- testing patients for *C. auris*
- isolating patients who are found to have *C. auris*
- giving patients who are found to have *C. auris* an antiseptic body wash and nasal gel to use
- following enhanced hand hygiene procedures and enhanced cleaning of affected clinical areas
- working closely with UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) regarding additional measures to limit the spread of *C. auris*

You can help to prevent the spread of *C. auris* by:

- washing your hands with soap and water and using alcohol gel frequently
- not touching any areas of broken skin or wound dressings

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Why do I need to be tested for C. auris?

It is not always immediately clear when a patient has C. auris. This can mean that there is a period before the patient with C. auris is isolated and moved from a shared bay to a single room.

We will test everyone sharing a bay with the patient who has C. auris, as there is a chance that they could have picked up C. auris and are now carrying it.

What does testing for C. auris involve?

We use a cotton swab to take samples from the armpit and groin (occasionally, we may take samples from open wounds). This is not painful. We can then test this sample for C. auris.

We will perform this test as soon as possible after identifying that you have been in contact with someone who has C. auris. We will then perform this test every other day for a period of a week, then twice a week for three weeks (if you are still in hospital).

Throughout this testing process, you will stay in either a single room on your own or a bay with other patients who have also been in contact with someone who has C. auris.

You can go home as soon as you are well enough to leave hospital. If you need to come back into hospital within the three-week period of you being in contact with someone who has C. auris, we will need to test you again, following the process above.

What do my results mean?

If your result is negative

If your result is negative after three weeks, and you are still in hospital, we will continue to test you twice a week. This is part of our guidance on managing C. auris. However, you will no longer have to stay in a single room.

If your result is positive

If your result is positive, the nurse caring for you will give you further information on C. auris and a separate factsheet.

We will continue to care for you in a single room or we may move you to a bay with other patients who also have C. auris. This is to help prevent C. auris spreading to other people.

If you show no signs of infection from C. auris, no treatment is needed. However, if you have an infection caused by C. auris, we will give you some antifungal medication to treat it. Your doctor will discuss this with you, if applicable.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a nurse or another member of the team caring for you.

Useful links

www.gov.uk/government/collections/candida-auris

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