



Candida auris patient information leaflet

What is Candida auris?

Candida auris (also known as C. auris) is a bug (yeast/ fungus) that is resistant to some of the more commonly used treatment options (antifungals). It is an MDRO which is short for multi drug resistant organism. This means that it is harder to kill than other more common yeasts and that we will take some extra precautions to protect you and other patients while you are in hospital. Sometimes, these kind of bugs are called 'superbugs'.

For most people most of the time, MRDOs such as C. auris live harmlessly on the skin or in the body which can be called "carriage or colonisation". Sometimes they can get into the bladder, kidney, lung or blood and cause very serious infection. This usually happens in patients who are very vulnerable – for example, when they need intensive care or when they are having chemotherapy. If you get any MDRO infection, it can be treated with special antimicrobials because the common treatments will not work. If you get a serious infection with an MRDO, doctors need to know as soon as possible so that you get the right treatment straight away.

How did I get C auris?

Your medical team may be able to tell you more about where the C auris came from but it is often not easy to say where or when a person picked up an MDRO. You might have had C. auris on your skin for some time before you had a test that found it. As this bug is still very rare most hospitals only test for the bug in people receiving special care such as ICU admissions or if you have been in hospital abroad.

What are the symptoms of C auris?

As long as C. auris stays on the skin it usually does not cause an illness. However, if it gets into the bladder, wound, kidney, your IV line or blood it can cause infection. To find out if C. auris is affecting you, your healthcare team/ medical team will take a swab or sample from one or more places on your body, and test those samples in the microbiology laboratory for the presence of these fungi/ bugs.

When this happens, the infection feels the same as infection caused by another bug. The person often gets a temperature, feels pain and starts to shiver. The only difference is that, if you need treatment, you will have to have special antifungals as ordinary treatments do not work.



To find out if *C. auris* is affecting you, your healthcare team/ medical team will take a swab or sample from one or more places on your body, and test those samples in the microbiology laboratory for the presence of these fungi/ bugs

How long will I have *C. auris*?

C. auris can live on your skin for months or even years. If you do not have to take antibiotics/ antifungals for a long time, you increase the chance of it fading away. We may offer you a special shampoo and body wash to help remove it.

How can we reduce the spread of the *C. auris*?

The best way to stop spread of all bugs is to keep hands and equipment clean. Staff caring for any patient should always clean their hands before and after. You should clean your hands regularly too. You need to clean your hands very thoroughly after going to the toilet; before eating and if touching any broken skin. Try not to touch wounds, dressings, IV lines or tubes unless asked to do so by your medical team.

In hospital, you will notice that the staff may be especially careful to clean their hands after they have been caring for you. Sometimes they will wear aprons and gloves.

You may be given a single room in hospital or we may put you in a separate bay with other patients with the same bug. These steps are taken to help reduce the spread of MDROs. If you know you are carrying a superbug, it is important to tell a member of staff when you come to hospital.

The hospital will record that you have *C. auris* on your patient chart. This will make sure that staff follow the correct hand hygiene procedures and give you the right treatment if you come back into hospital.

What happens when I go home?

The risk is very small that *C. auris* will do harm to people in fairly good general health. You do not need to do anything different from anyone else as you go about your normal life at home and when you're out and about. Clothes, bed linen and dishes can be washed as usual. Just as for everybody else, though, we recommend that you clean your hands thoroughly. Everyone should clean their hands before eating or preparing food. Clean hands protect you and others from the spread of bugs, not just MDROs. If you go home with a wound, an IV line or a catheter it is very important that you try not to touch these unless your medical team have trained you to do so and your hands are cleaned first.



Following good hand hygiene practice all the time helps to prevent the spread of bacteria, viruses and fungi. When you use the toilet, it is really important that you leave the toilet clean and in the condition that you would like to find it.

Further information

Please do not hesitate to ask the healthcare staff caring for you if you have any questions, or if you require more information about *C. auris*. Information on hand hygiene, infection control and managing superbugs at home is available on www.hse.ie/infectioncontrol or on www.hpsc.ie

Note to Healthcare Workers

This leaflet is for patients who have been identified by the laboratory or the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) team as having *C. auris*.