

Candidozyma auris (C. auris)

Information for patients and visitors

Candidozyma auris (*C. auris*) is an uncommon fungus (yeast) that usually shows no symptoms but can lead to bloodstream, wound or urine infections. This guide aims to provide key information on the fungus, how patients are tested, steps in place to help the spread of *C. auris*, its treatment, and information for hospital visitors.

What is *Candidozyma auris*?

C. auris is a fungus (yeast) that belongs to the wider family of Candida species. It is much less common than other types of Candida such as *Candida albicans*, which live on the skin and in the gut.

C. auris has only recently emerged across the globe. Some people can be carriers without realising it, as they have no symptoms and do not become unwell as a result. However, in hospitalised patients, *C. auris* can occasionally get into surgical wounds or enter the body during medical treatments, including operations or when bladder catheters or drips are inserted. Infections are usually minor but can become more serious, although serious infections are rare.

How is *C. auris* spread and what can be done to prevent it?

People who carry *C. auris* on the skin or in body fluids can shed the fungus into the environment, including on to horizontal surfaces (for example, floor, tables, door handles) and equipment. It can also be transmitted on hands. *C. auris* is difficult to clear completely from the environment and it is easy to pick up on clothes, equipment and hands.

To prevent the spread of *C. auris*, we have several additional measures in place for staff, including:

- handwashing before and after contact with every patient
- testing patients to identify those that are colonised (yeast is on the body but it does not make you sick)
- using single rooms for patients who are infected or colonised with *C. auris* (if no single rooms are available, patients may be cared for together in a separate bay)
- ensuring health professionals wear gowns, gloves and aprons when caring for patients who have infections or are colonised with *C. auris*
- cleaning surfaces and equipment that may have *C. auris* on them

How and when might I be tested for *C. auris*?

You will be screened if:

- you have shared the same bay or ward with a patient who has been found unexpected positive for *C. auris* (also known as having had 'contact' with a positive patient)

- you have been in another hospital, in the UK or abroad, where there has been an outbreak of *C. auris*
- you were tested during a previous admission to hospital and tested positive
- you are a patient in a Critical Care Unit (you will be tested on a weekly basis while on the unit)

A doctor or nurse may take swabs from different parts of your body to test for the presence of *C. auris*.

What can I do to prevent the spread of *C. auris*?

The best way to prevent the spread of *C. auris* is to wash your hands regularly, especially after using the toilet and before eating food. You should also avoid touching any areas of broken skin or wound dressings.

What precautions should visitors take?

Healthy people do not usually become infected with *C. auris* but if in close contact with a positive person, they can temporarily carry the fungus.

Visitors should therefore minimise close contact, wash their hands, and use alcohol hand gel before and after touching patients or any items around the bedside. Visitors may also be asked to wear a gown or a plastic apron and gloves.

What happens after I go home?

If you have an infection, it will be treated before you are discharged. If you are a carrier or colonised, no special measures or treatment are required when you go home. If you are admitted to any hospital later, you should let the hospital staff know that you are or have been colonised. A note will also be made on your health record when you are discharged from hospital care.

Who to contact for further information?

Please speak to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns about *C. auris*.

You can also contact the Infection Prevention and Controls teams at our hospital sites:

King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill

Tel: **020 3299 8173**

Email: **kch-tr.KCH-IC-Nurse@nhs.net**

Princess Royal University Hospital, Orpington Hospital, Beckenham Beacon and Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup.

Tel: **01689 863459**

Email: **kch-tr.PRUHInfectionPreventionandControlNurses@nhs.net**

MyChart

Our MyChart app and website lets you securely access parts of your health record with us, giving you more control over your care. To sign up or for help, call us on 020 3299 4618 or email kings.mychart@nhs.net. Visit www.kch.nhs.uk/mychart to find out more.

Sharing your information

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has partnered with Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust through the King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas' hospitals. King's College Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trusts share an electronic patient record system, which means information about your health record can be accessed safely and securely by health and care staff at both Trusts. For more information visit www.kch.nhs.uk.

Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

Tel: **020 3299 4618**

Email: **kings.pals@nhs.net**

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Interpreting and Accessible Communication Support on 020 3299 4618 or email kings.access@nhs.net