

Candida auris



Information for patients and visitors

This information sheet explains some of the questions you may have about *Candida auris*. It explains how it is spread and how you can prevent it.

Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your **name** and **date of birth** and check your **ID band**. If you don't have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address.

If we don't ask these questions, then please ask us to check.

Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

What is *Candida auris*?

Candida auris (*C. auris*) is a fungus (yeast) that belongs to the wider family of *Candida* species. It is much less common than other type 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 urinary catheters or drips are inserted, leading to blood stream infections. Infections are usually minor but can become more serious, although serious infections are rare.

How and when do you test a patient for *C. auris*?

A healthcare professional may take swabs from different parts of a patient's body to test for *C. auris* presence. This may happen on admission to hospital or during a patient's hospital stay.

Screening will be offered 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 may also be screened if you have been in another hospital, in the UK or abroad, where there has been an outbreak of *C. auris*.

What will happen if I have *C. auris* infection or if I am a carrier?

If the result is positive, please ask your doctor or nurse to explain this to you in more detail. Patients who carry *C. auris* may be treated with antiseptic shampoo and body wash to reduce its presence on the skin.

If you have an infection caused by *C. auris*, it is usually treated with antifungal medicines.



You will be cared for in a single room until you leave the hospital. This is to help prevent the spread of *C. auris* to other patients.

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 (floor, tables, door handles etc) and equipment. *C. auris* 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. The spread of infection can be limited by washing hands and using alcohol gel before and after touching patients or any items around the bedside. Visitors may also be asked to wear a gown, plastic aprons and gloves.

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

- handwashing before and after contact with every patient
- screening to identify patients who are carriers
- using single rooms for patients who are infected with, or are carrying *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 carriers of *C. auris*
- cleaning surfaces and equipment that may be contaminated with *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, plastic aprons 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, no special measures or treatment are required when you go home. If you are admitted to any hospital at a later date, you should let the hospital staff know that you are or have been a carrier. A note will also be made on your health record when you are discharged from hospital care.

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 Control teams at our hospital sites:

King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill

Tel: **020 3299 4374**

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

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

Tel: **01689 863463**

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



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.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: **020 3299 3601**

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

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND

Tel: **01689 863252**

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

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net.



