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*Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.*



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## Technical Bulletin

**Date:** April 22, 2022  
**Topic:** *Candida auris*  
**Contact:** Kimisha Causey, MPH, Nevada State Healthcare Associated Infection Program  
**To:** Health Care Facilities, Laboratories, Public Health Professionals, Health Care Providers

### Background:

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) *Candida auris* is an emerging fungus that presents a serious global health threat. CDC is concerned about *C. auris* for three main reasons:

1. It is often multidrug-resistant, meaning that it is resistant to multiple antifungal drugs commonly used to treat *Candida* infections. Some strains are resistant to all three available classes of antifungals.
2. It is difficult to identify with standard laboratory methods, and it can be misidentified in labs without specific technology. Misidentification may lead to inappropriate management.
3. It has caused outbreaks in health care settings. For this reason, it is important to quickly identify *C. auris* in a hospitalized patient so that health care facilities can take special precautions to stop its spread.

*Candida auris* can cause severe illness in hospitalized patients and if introduced into the bloodstream can spread throughout the body and cause serious invasive infections which can affect the blood, heart, brain, eyes, bones, and other parts of the body. As of April 18, 2022, the Nevada Healthcare-Associated Infection (HAI) Program has been investigating *C. auris* outbreaks in acute care hospitals, long term acute care hospitals, and skilled nursing facilities. Please see the guidance below from CDC on infection prevention and control measures that health care facilities should establish to prevent the spread of *C. auris*.

### Guidance for Health Care Facilities, Public Health Professionals, Health Care Providers:

- **Proper hand hygiene** must be used when caring for patients. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is effective against *C. auris*. If hands are visibly soiled, wash with soap and water. Wearing gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.
- **Contact precautions** should be used for patients with *C. auris* in an acute care setting or long-term acute care hospitals. Patients within skilled nursing facilities should be managed using either contact precautions or **enhanced barrier precautions**, depending on the situation. Ensure patients with an unknown multidrug-resistant organism (MDRO) status are placed on proper precautions until their MDRO status is known.
- In circumstances when patients or residents are colonized with *C. auris* or other MDROs are placed in shared rooms, facilities must implement strategies to help minimize transmission between roommates. These strategies include:
  - Maintaining spatial separation of at least 3 feet between roommates.
  - Using privacy curtains to limit direct contact.
  - Cleaning and disinfecting any shared reusable equipment.
  - Cleaning and disinfecting environmental surfaces on a more frequent schedule.
  - Changing personal protective equipment and performing hand hygiene when moving between roommates.
- **Environmental disinfection:** Perform thorough **daily and terminal cleaning and disinfection** in patient/resident rooms, patient/resident care areas, on shared equipment, and high-touch surfaces using effective hospital-grade chemicals. It is important to **follow all manufacturers' directions** for use of surface disinfectants and applying

the product for the **correct contact time**. Environmental agents from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [List P](#) are effective against *C. auris*. The EPA's [List K](#) is appropriate to use if disinfecting agents from List P are not readily available.

- **Patient transfer** should be conducted using an interfacility transfer form. The patient's *C. auris* and/or MDRO infection or colonization status should be communicated to the receiving facility prior to transfer to ensure the patient/resident is placed on the proper precautions at the time of admission.
- **Education** of all health care personnel and environmental services personnel about *C. auris* and the need for appropriate precautions is important to ensure adherence to all infection control measures. Staff should have adequate supplies to implement infection control measures. Perform audits and provide feedback regularly to ensure staff compliance to infection prevention policies and procedures.
- **Surveillance and screening** to identify new infections and colonization is essential for implementing the appropriate infection prevention and control practices and preventing transmission within the facility. In units where *C. auris* was detected it is recommended to screen the unit to identify additional cases. [Click here to learn more about screening and surveillance.](#)
- **Report** cases of *C. auris* infection and colonization to the HAI Program by sending a secure email to [outbreak@health.nv.gov](mailto:outbreak@health.nv.gov). If secure email is not available, please fax reports to 702-486-0490. HAI Program staff can assist with screening supplies and onsite assessment to help identify new cases of *C. auris* and identify gaps in infection prevention and control practices.

#### Guidance for Laboratories

- Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 4411.235 requires clinical/medical laboratories to submit microbiological cultures for specific organisms to the State Public Health Laboratory for confirmation and further testing. *Candida auris* is included in the list of organisms that are required to be submitted. Please see the [Technical Bulletin dated October 8, 2021, linked here](#) for additional details on specimen submission, as well as [the updated list of organisms available online here](#).

#### For more information on *Candida auris* please visit the links below:

- [Information for Laboratorians and Health Professionals](#)
- [Antifungal Susceptibility Testing and Interpretation](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control](#)
- *C. auris* Toolkit will be posted on the [HAI Program website](#) under **Education**
- Interfacility transfer form will be posted on the [HAI Program website](#) under **HAI Prevention and Control Forms**

#### Questions:

For updated guidance, please review the DPBH Technical Bulletin [website](#) and Nevada's Health Response [website](#) regularly. Please email [outbreak@health.nv.gov](mailto:outbreak@health.nv.gov) for other questions regarding *C. auris*.



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