

# Candida (Candidozyma) auris (C. auris) Outbreak Investigation Protocol for a Single Facility

## I. Outbreak Investigation Protocol: Initial Outbreak Investigation Activities

- **Epidemiologic Assessments:** The **LHD** will obtain digitally completed *C. auris* epidemiologic assessments for all cases associated with the healthcare facility. The LHD will securely provide copies of digitally completed *C. auris* epidemiologic assessments to **NJDOH** for review.
- **Confirmation of a Suspected Outbreak:** **NJDOH** will review *C. auris* epidemiologic assessments and determine if a *C. auris* outbreak is suspected.
- **E-number:** Upon confirmation of a suspected *C. auris* outbreak, **NJDOH** will generate a unique outbreak identification number, known as an e-number, using the Outbreak Module within the Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System (CDRSS).
- **Coordinate Colonization Screenings:** **NJDOH** will coordinate and schedule a minimum of two point prevalence surveys (PPSs) at least one week apart at the affected healthcare facility based on statewide screening schedules and public health laboratory capacity. The **LHD** will provide colonization screening instructions to the facility and educate the facility on the PPS process in advance of the scheduled date for specimen collection. Results of the first two PPSs will determine whether additional outbreak investigation and response activities are warranted.
- **Establish Team:** Once the e-number is assigned, the **LHD with jurisdiction over the affected healthcare facility** will establish a *C. auris* Investigation Team, which may include the Health Officer, Disease Investigator, Public Health Nurse, and/or Registered Environmental Health Specialist. The Health Officer should designate a primary LHD Team Lead. **NJDOH** staff will be part of the *C. auris* Investigation Team to coordinate/approve all necessary colonization screenings and provide technical support and guidance.
- **Facility Notification:** The **LHD** will formally notify key healthcare facility leadership (e.g., facility owner, administrator, infection preventionist, director of nursing) that an outbreak investigation is being initiated. The notification is crucial for informing them about the public health investigation and outlining the necessary next steps. A template email for this communication can be found via the link provided below.

### LHD Checklist

- ☐ Obtain completed *C. auris* epidemiologic assessments from the affected facility for all cases associated with the facility investigation
- ☐ Provide digitally completed *C. auris* epidemiologic assessments to NJDOH
- ☐ Link the outbreak identification number (e-number) to associated CDRSS cases

- ☐ Assign LHD staff member(s) to be part of the *C. auris* Investigation Team
- ☐ Send written notification to key healthcare facility leadership and points of contact
- ☐ Provide the facility with colonization screening instructions document
- ☐ Educate healthcare facility staff on the PPS process prior to the specimen collection date

## Resources

- [C. auris Epidemiologic Assessment](#)
- [Instructions for Digital Completion and Submission of the C. auris Epidemiologic Assessment](#)
- [Template Letter to Notify a Healthcare Facility of a C. auris Outbreak Investigation](#)
- [Facility Instructions for Conducting a C. auris PPS](#)
- [C. auris Patient Screening Factsheet](#)

## II. Outbreak Investigation Protocol: *Additional Outbreak Investigation & Response Activities*

- **Infection Control Assessment:** The **LHD** will ensure completion of the *C. auris* Infection Control Assessment tool. Depending on the situation, this standardized tool may be completed independently and submitted to the *C. auris* Investigation Team by the healthcare facility, completed during a conference call between the healthcare facility and the *C. auris* Investigation Team, or completed during the course of an outbreak site visit.
- **Outbreak Site Visit:** If **NJDOH** determines an outbreak site visit is warranted, the *C. auris* Investigation Team will conduct an on-site assessment of infection prevention and control practices at the outbreak facility. The **LHD** will coordinate with the *C. auris* Investigation Team (**LHD and NJDOH**) and the facility's staff to schedule an outbreak site visit, typically within 20 business days of issuing the e-number.
- **Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations:** Based on the findings of the infection control assessment and/or outbreak site visit, **NJDOH** will develop a written report outlining identified gaps and corresponding infection prevention and control recommendations. The **LHD** will provide the written report to the healthcare facility.
- **Continued Follow Up on IPC Gaps:** The **LHD** will support **NJDOH** in following up with the impacted healthcare facility to assess which IPC recommendations have been implemented and which IPC gaps remain unaddressed. Facility follow-up may be conducted remotely (e.g., by email, phone, video call) or on-site if/when feasible. Updates on infection prevention and control gaps and the implementation status of recommendations shall be documented in the site visit report template provided by **NJDOH**.
- **Ongoing Assessment of Transmission via Colonization Screenings:** **NJDOH**, in collaboration with the **LHD**, will schedule serial point prevalence surveys (PPSs) with the affected healthcare facility based on statewide screening schedules and public health laboratory capacity. The **LHD** will obtain and provide **NJDOH** with digitally completed *C. auris* epidemiologic assessments corresponding to additional new cases identified during subsequent PPSs.

### LHD Checklist

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct the Infection Control Assessment<br><br><input type="checkbox"/> Provide the completed <i>C. auris</i> Infection Control Assessment tool to NJDOH | <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate timing of key care activities with <i>C. auris</i> Investigation Team to develop the outbreak site visit agenda<br><br><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct the outbreak site visit |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Receive written interim IPC recommendations from NJDOH (typically within 5 business days of completing the Infection Control Assessment)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide the facility with interim IPC recommendations within 2 business days of receipt from NJDOH</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Link the outbreak identification number (e-number) to associated CDRSS cases newly identified through serial PPSs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Schedule the outbreak site visit with the healthcare facility and the <i>C. auris</i> Investigation Team</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a summary of the outbreak and all associated cases for the outbreak site visit</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate timing of key care activity observations (e.g., wound care, respiratory therapy, blood glucose testing) with the healthcare facility</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Obtain any outstanding information or documents during the outbreak site visit</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Receive written outbreak site visit recommendations from NJDOH (typically within 20 business days of completing the outbreak site visit)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide the facility with outbreak site visit recommendations within 2 business days of receipt from NJDOH</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct recurring follow-up (e.g., every 2 weeks) with the healthcare facility to obtain updates on the implementation status of IPC recommendations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide documentation of IPC recommendations implemented and remaining gaps to NJDOH</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consult with NJDOH to determine when to conclude the outbreak investigation</li> </ul> |
| <b>Resources</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NJDOH C. auris Outbreak Investigation Infection Control Assessment Tool</a></li> <li>• NJDOH audit tools (available on the <a href="#">Antimicrobial Resistance webpage</a>)</li> <li>• Site Visit Agenda and Sign-in Sheet (<i>available upon request</i>)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |