

## INFORMATION AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PATIENTS WITH *CANDIDA AURIS*

### What is *Candida auris*?

*Candida auris* (*C. auris*) is a fungus that can cause serious, difficult to treat infections. Many of the medications that are used to treat *C. auris* often do not work. The fungus is known to resist the different treatment options that are supposed to help you get better. Patients can have (“carry”) this germ without knowing it (called “colonization”).

### What does it mean to have *C. auris*?

Colonization, or being colonized with *C. auris*, means that a person has the fungus somewhere on or in their body, but does not have an infection or symptoms of infection. Individuals can still pass the germ to others even if they are not actively showing signs or symptoms of infection. “Infection” in this context means having active symptoms, such as fever, pain, discomfort, or fatigue, which may require treatment.

If you “carry” the germ, there is a chance of becoming sick from it at some point in the future. Certain factors can increase the chances of getting sick, such as long-term stays in health care facilities, having wounds, or using medical devices like breathing tubes, feeding tubes, or catheters. Other risk factors include recent transplants, long-term use of antibiotics, or having been in the intensive care unit.

### Why is it important to know if you have *C. auris*?

Individuals that “carry” these germs on their skin and in their body can spread this germ to other at-risk people and to the environment. At this time, there is no known way to remove the germ once a person is colonized. Therefore, it is very important to identify patients that “carry” *C. auris* to prevent these individuals from becoming sick and prevent spreading the germ to other patients in the health care setting. Furthermore, patients that become sick with *C. auris* also remain colonized and are at risk of getting sick in the future.

### How will knowing that you have *C. auris* impact your health care stay?

To prevent patients colonized with these germs from getting sick, it is important for your health care providers, caregivers, and family members that assist in your medical care to know that you have *C. auris*. While in the health care facility, they can make sure to practice basic infection prevention and control measures. These measures include performing hand hygiene (including soap and water, and using hand sanitizer), using gloves and gowns, and regularly cleaning and disinfecting reusable medical equipment/devices, as well as the health care environment.

### How will knowing that you have *C. auris* impact your home life?

When you are not in a health care facility, it is not recommended for family or household members to use gloves and gowns, or to stop having physical contact with you. You and your family or household members should perform good hand washing practices,

especially after using the bathroom and after direct contact with wounds or body fluids, such as blood, stool, urine, and vomit. Lastly, you and your household members can prevent getting sick from any germs through good personal hygiene, such as regularly washing the body and hair with soap/shampoo and water.

If you receive any home health care services (like a visiting nurse), it is important to let your home health care workers or aides know that you have *C. auris*. They can take action to prevent spreading it by cleaning their hands and wearing a gown and gloves as needed. They will also clean and disinfect any reusable equipment that was used during care.

### **Can you give *C. auris* to your family and household members?**

It is unlikely that you would give this germ to your household members as healthy people are not likely to get *C. auris*. This germ tends to impact at-risk individuals, such as those with long health care stays, admissions to an intensive care unit, wounds, medical devices like tubes and catheters going into their body, exposure to a long course of antibiotics, or a recent organ transplant.

### **How long will you have *C. auris*?**

We do not know exactly how long people have or “carry” *C. auris*. Many people that continue to require challenging medical care provided within nursing homes and other inpatient health care facilities continue to carry *C. auris* for years. For this reason, it is important to let any of your health care providers and facilities know about your positive *C. auris* status so the appropriate steps can be put in place to prevent spreading it to others.

### **Do you need treatment?**

Your health care provider will tell you if you need treatment. If *C. auris* is not making you sick, you should not need treatment. Taking medications when they are not needed could make the problem worse and increase the time that you carry this germ.