



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Public Health

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February 24, 2023

To: North Carolina Clinicians and Laboratories
From: Zack Moore, MD, MPH, State Epidemiologist
Scott M. Shone, PhD, HCLD(ABB), Public Health Laboratory Director

Subject: *Candida auris* identification in North Carolina

This memo is intended to alert healthcare providers and laboratories about the first reported cases of *Candida auris* (*C. auris*) in North Carolina. Clinicians and laboratorians should be aware of screening recommendations for *C. auris* and consider this information when evaluating patients with infections caused by *Candida* species.

Background:

C. auris is a multidrug-resistant fungus that spreads easily in healthcare settings and can cause invasive infections associated with mortality rates of up to 60%. *C. auris* can also cause prolonged asymptomatic colonization, during which time it can still be transmitted to others. Over 90% of isolates are resistant to at least one class of antifungal, and reports of pan-resistant strains are increasing. *C. auris* can be spread from person to person via touch and through contact with contaminated medical equipment or environmental surfaces. The first two reported cases of *C. auris* with no known exposure outside North Carolina were identified in an acute care hospital in February 2023. Both were identified through screening and neither have developed illness related to *C. auris*.

Recommendations:

In light of the recent *C. auris* identification, the NC Division of Public Health's Communicable Disease Branch and State Laboratory of Public Health (SLPH) ask that clinicians and laboratories consider the following recommendations.

Surveillance

- Ensure a system is in place to rapidly notify infection prevention and public health of any suspected or confirmed *C. auris* cases.
- Consult with clinical laboratories to determine capacity for *C. auris* identification and be aware of any potential misidentifications.
- Screen any patients who have had an overnight stay in a healthcare facility outside the United States in the past 12 months for *C. auris*. This screening, including collection devices and shipping, is available through the Antimicrobial Resistance Laboratory Network (ARLN) at no cost to facilities or patients. Please contact nchai@dhhs.nc.gov to coordinate screening.

Infection Prevention

- Place any patients with suspected or confirmed *C. auris* on contact precautions in a single patient room immediately.
- *C. auris* is known to widely contaminate the environment and can persist in the environment for several weeks. Conduct daily and terminal environmental cleaning using an EPA-registered, hospital-grade disinfectant that is effective against *C. difficile* spores.
- For additional information, please see CDC's [infection prevention recommendations for *C. auris*](#).

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EPIDEMIOLOGY SECTION • COMMUNICABLE DISEASE BRANCH

LOCATION: 225 North McDowell Street, Raleigh, NC 27601
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www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-733-7301 • FAX: 919-733-1020

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Identification

C. auris can be difficult to identify by standard laboratory methods and may be misidentified as other *Candida* species. Laboratorians should be aware of potential misidentifications. If any of the species listed on the CDC's [Identification of *Candida auris*](#) website are identified, or if the species identity cannot be determined, please contact the State Laboratory of Public Health Mycology Laboratory at 919-733-7834 for guidance on identification.

Reporting

We continue to request that any clinician or facility that suspects *C. auris* infection and laboratories that suspect or identify *C. auris* notify the SHARPPS Program at nchai@dhhs.nc.gov or call the 24/7 NC Communicable Disease epidemiologist on call at 919-733-3419.