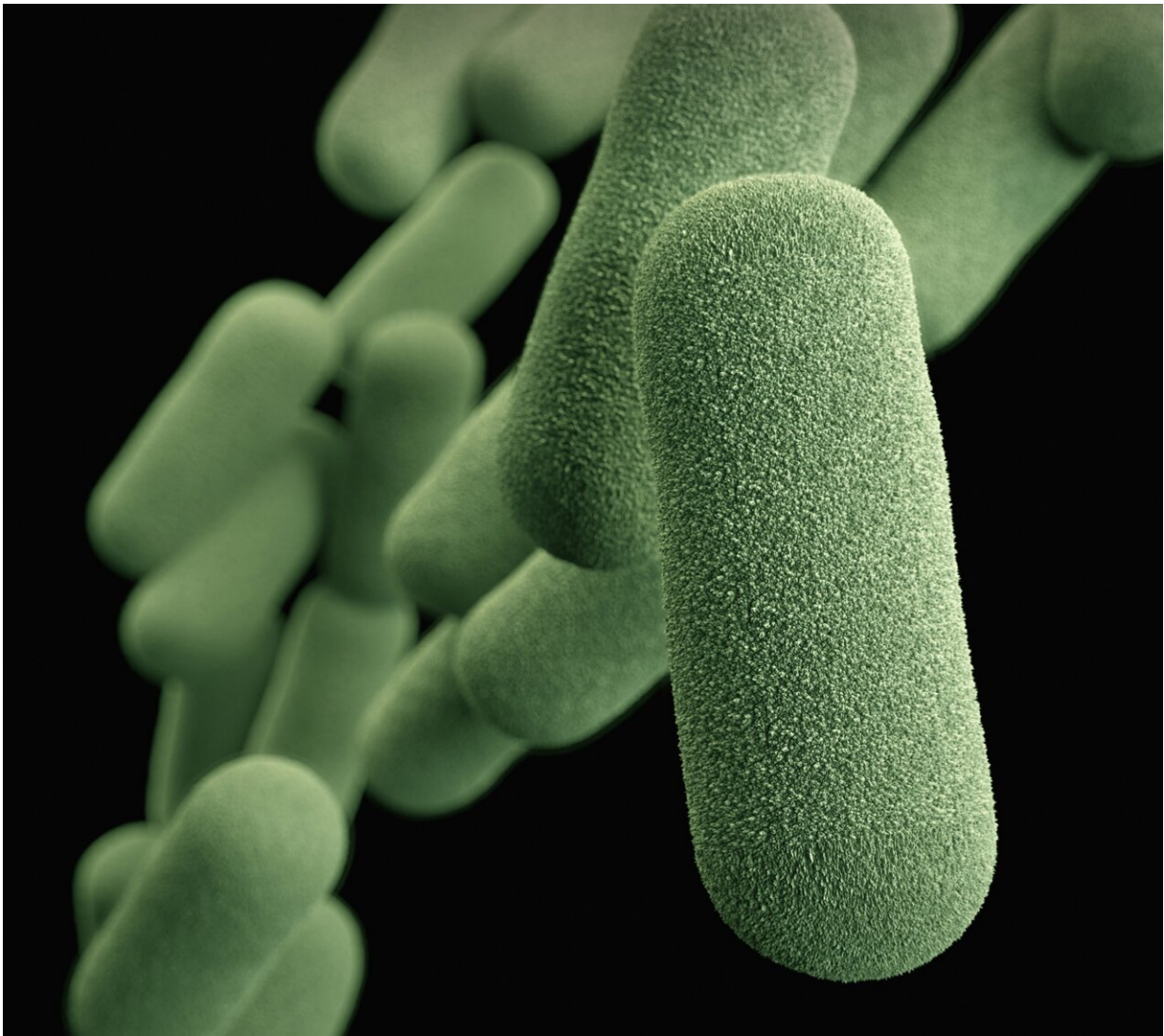


Deadly fungal infection *Candida auris* in 2023: Should you be worried?

March 27 2023, by Dr. Katherine Baumgarten



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

You might have heard or read about the 'superbug' *Candida auris* (*C. auris*), but is it as scary as the news makes it seem? Read on to learn what is it, who is at risk for getting it and what you can do to protect yourself and your family.

What is *Candida auris*?

C. auris is a [fungal disease](#) that can spread in healthcare settings, including hospitals, and causes [invasive infections](#). It often does not respond to common antifungal drugs, making infections difficult to treat and earning it the 'superbug' name. Additionally, it is difficult to identify with standard laboratory methods, which can lead to inappropriate treatment.

C. auris was first reported in the United States in 2016, showing up most notably in New York and Illinois, but the drug-resistant fungus is now in more than half the 50 states. Over the course of 2021, 1,474 clinical cases were reported, about a 200% increase from the nearly 500 cases in 2019. The [CDC's tracking site for *C. auris*](#) shows that there was another sharp increase in cases in 2022 with 2,377 infections reported last year.

Who is at risk of getting *Candida auris*?

C. auris typically affects patients who already have a serious medical condition or are immunocompromised, and it can affect patients of all ages.

Patients who appear to be at the highest risk for infection are those who:

- Have been hospitalized in a [healthcare facility](#) for an extended period of time
- Have a central venous catheter or other lines or tubes entering

their body

- Have previously received antibiotics or antifungal medications

What are the symptoms of Candida auris and treatment options?

Symptoms vary, depending on the site or type of infection but commonly include a fever and chills that don't respond to antibiotics.

Most of these infections can be treated with a type of antifungal medications known as echinocandins. But some [strains](#) resist all three main classes of drugs, requiring higher doses of multiple medications. In these cases, consulting an expert on [fungal infections](#) may be advised.

Should I be worried about Candida auris?

The short answer is that if you are healthy, you don't need to worry. *C. auris* does not cause infections in otherwise healthy people. The same things we recommend when preventing the spread of any infection are also true with *C. auris*. So be sure to wash your hands and keep surfaces clean as recommended to avoid any infection.

Provided by Ochsner Health

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