

Candida auris

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In news- Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have warned about an **emerging fungus** Candida auris in the US, adding that it poses a “serious global health threat”.

What is Candida auris?

- Candida auris (C. auris) is **a yeast, a family of fungus** which contains species pretty helpful to humans in activities such as bread-making and beer-brewing, but which also features species that cause infections in humans.
- **First reported in 2016**, cases and transmission rate of Candida auris, also termed C. auris, have only risen in recent years, with a dramatic increase in 2021.
- **The fungus is considered an urgent antimicrobial resistance (AR) threat**, spreading at an alarming rate in US healthcare facilities in 2020-2021.
- **Transmission of this fungus is mainly through contaminated surfaces in hospitals.** It sticks to intravenous lines and blood pressure cuffs. It's really hard to clean of.

Why is it a concern?

- The World Health Organization (WHO) notes that fungal pathogens are a major threat to public health as they are becoming **increasingly common and resistant to treatment** with only four classes of antifungal medicines currently available, and few candidates in the clinical pipeline.
- **Most fungal pathogens lack rapid and sensitive diagnostics** and those that exist are not widely available or affordable globally.
- 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.

- It is **difficult to identify with standard laboratory methods** and can be misidentified in labs without specific technology. Misidentification may lead to inappropriate management.
- It has caused outbreaks in healthcare settings. For this reason, it is important to quickly identify *C. auris* in a hospitalised patient so that healthcare facilities can take special precautions to stop its spread.
- **WHO released the first-ever list of health-threatening fungi report in October 2022.**

Is it similar to candida infection, a common yeast infection?

While common candidiasis causes white discharge, which is easily treatable with antifungals, *C. auris* presents a completely different picture. It's symptoms may not be noticeable because patients with *C. auris* infection are often those who are already sick and are in the hospital with another serious illness.

Symptoms-

- Symptoms of *C. auris* infection depend on the part of the body affected.
- It can cause many different types of infections, such as bloodstream infection, wound infection, and ear infection.
- Special preventive measures are taken by doctors to prevent its spread in case a patient having this infection is undergoing any surgery.