



State of Maryland

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To: EMS Clinicians

From: Timothy Chizmar, MD, FACEP
State EMS Medical Director

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Re: Precautions to Prevent Transmission of Infections

In daily clinical care, you will likely encounter patients with known or suspected infections who require specific precautions to prevent transmission of disease. Patients may present with signs of an active infection, such as a wound, or they may display no evident signs of illness. Regardless, the infectious agent may be transmitted to EMS personnel or other patients if proper precautions are not taken.

Recently, we were informed of the first case of *Candida auris* in a Maryland resident. *C. auris* can cause fungal infections which are resistant to many common antifungal medications. Most often, these infections will occur in patients with suppressed immune systems, multiple medical conditions, or indwelling catheters and devices. In addition, patients or EMS personnel may become “colonized” with *C. auris*, which means that these people display no active symptoms of infection, however they can still serve as hosts to transmit this drug-resistant fungus to others.

We need your help to control the transmission of *C. auris* and other drug-resistant infections, such as methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* (MRSA) and vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE). Here are a few steps you can take in your daily clinical care:

- **Hand hygiene** – Perform hand hygiene before and after all patient care activities.
- **Use Standard Precautions** – These precautions apply to all patients regardless of confirmed or suspected infection status, including hand hygiene, use of gloves, gown, mask, eye protection or face shield, depending upon the anticipated exposure, and safe injection practices. The application of these practices depends upon the nature of EMS clinician-patient interaction (gloves and face shield for intubation).
- **Transmission-Based Precautions** – If the patient is known to have infection or colonization, take appropriate precautions specific to the infection. An example of this would be standard and contact precautions (gloves and gown), which are recommended for all interactions with a patient with *C. auris*.
- **Cleaning and Disinfecting Equipment** – The healthcare environment should be cleaned and disinfected after each patient transport. For *C. auris*, specific sporicidal products on the EPA List K must be used (see below).

Candida auris and other drug-resistant organisms represent urgent public health concerns due to their tendency to spread rapidly in healthcare settings and resistance to multiple medications. Thank you for your attention to infection control and precautions. With your assistance, we can prevent transmission of infectious agents among our patients and EMS clinicians in Maryland.

Infection Prevention References:

Standard Precautions: <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/isolation/precautions.html#IIIa>

Transmission-Based Precautions (Contact, Droplet, Airborne):

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/isolation/precautions.html#IIIb>

Candida auris: <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/candida-auris/health-professionals.html>

https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Candida_auris.aspx

EPA List K: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-k-epas-registered-antimicrobial-products-effective-against-clostridium>