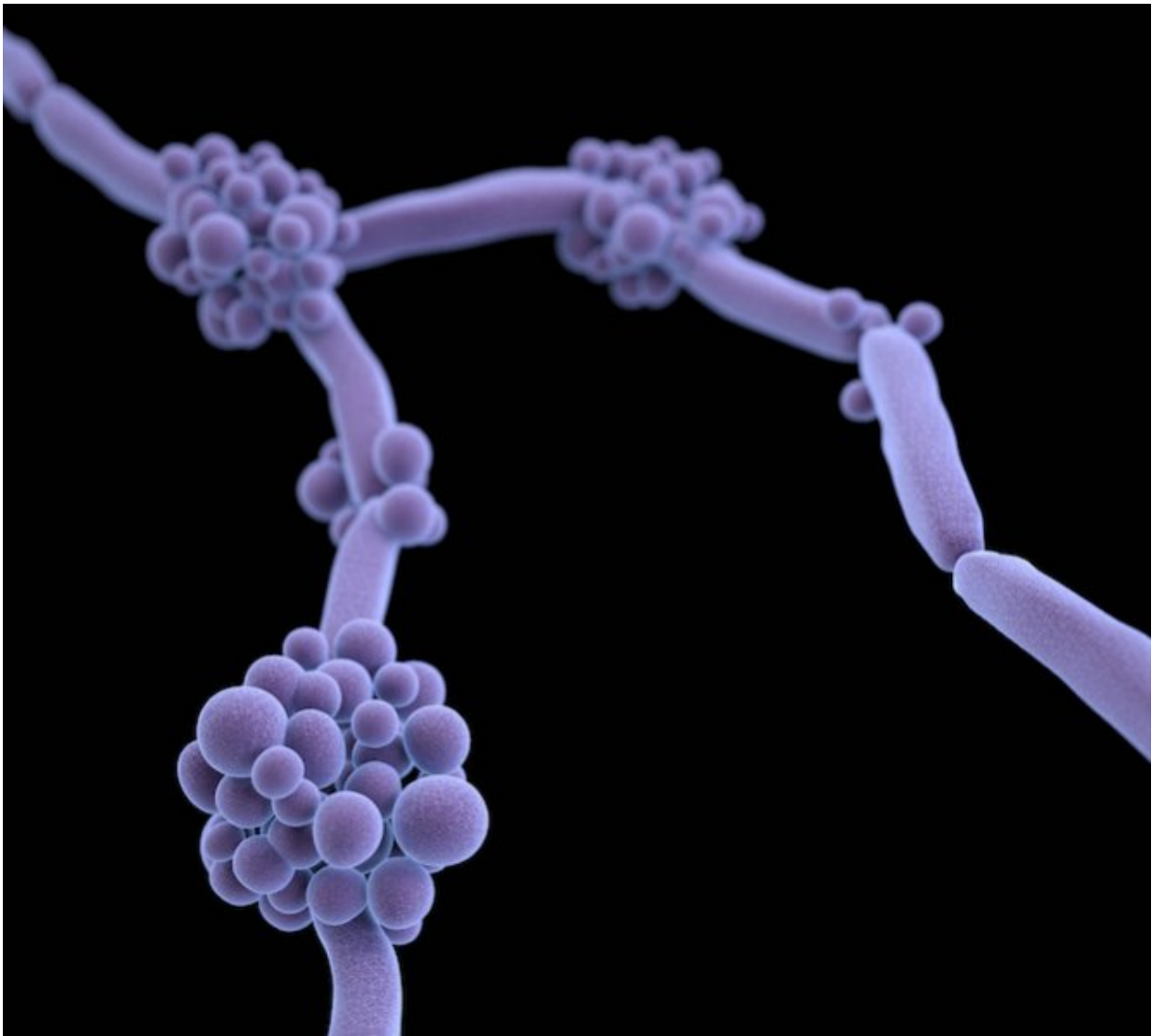


# Here's what you need to know about *Candida auris*, a superbug that's spreading in the US

April 22 2019, by Sarah Meehan

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*Candida albicans*, which is related to *Candida auris*. Credit: CDC

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is alerting health care facilities to monitor for *Candida auris*, a drug-resistant fungus that is difficult to diagnose and treat, and often spreads in hospitals, nursing homes and other health care environments.

Here's what you need to know about it.

## **What is *Candida auris*?**

A type of yeast, *Candida auris* can severely sicken and sometimes kill [patients](#) if it enters the bloodstream and spreads throughout the body. In addition to bloodstream infections, *Candida auris* can also infect the ears and wounds.

The rare fungus was discovered in 2009.

## **Why is it hard to treat?**

*Candida auris* often doesn't respond to common antifungal drugs. It is difficult to identify in lab tests and can afflict people who are already sick, so it is also frequently misdiagnosed.

## **What are the symptoms?**

The most common symptoms of *Candida auris* fever and chills that don't subside after being treated with antibiotics for a suspected bacterial infection.

## **How many cases have been diagnosed in the U.S.?**

As of March 29, the U.S. had recorded 617 cases in 12 states, according to the CDC. Another 1,056 patients were found to be carrying the fungus without signs of infection, the CDC said.

Most of the recent cases have occurred in New York City, New Jersey and Chicago, according to the CDC.

## **What about in Maryland?**

There have been only three cases in Maryland since 2016, according to the CDC and Maryland Department of Health. One case was diagnosed in 2016, with two in 2018, a [health](#) department spokeswoman said in an email. She declined to specify where those cases occurred.

## **How does it spread?**

The fungus can colonize on patients' skin and surfaces in [health care facilities](#), where it can live for a long period of time, allowing it to spread to new patients. The fungus can spread from person to person or from a contaminated surface to a person.

## **Who is at risk?**

People most at risk of contracting Candida auris include patients who have endured long hospital stays, people with compromised immune systems, those who have a central venous line or other tubes in their bodies, and people who have previously received antibiotics for fungal infections, according to the CDC and state health department.

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Citation: Here's what you need to know about Candida auris, a superbug that's spreading in the US (2019, April 22) retrieved 20 July 2023 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-04-candida-auris-superbug.html>

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