# UKHSA issues urgent warning over global spread of drug-resistant Candida auris fungus



An urgent warning has been issued by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) regarding the spread of Candida auris, a fungus characterised as a "threat to humanity." First identified in Japan in 2009, this pathogen has rapidly proliferated globally, now found in over 40 countries. Health experts express deep concern over its resilience, as Candida auris can survive on surfaces for extended periods, complicating efforts to control outbreaks within healthcare settings.

The UKHSA highlighted that while cases are not yet widespread in England, the fungus poses a significant risk, particularly in hospital environments. Those with pre-existing health conditions are more vulnerable, with fatality rates ranging from 30% to 60% in severe cases. "C. auris is a growing global health concern," the agency stated, underlining the fungus's ability to swiftly propagate in healthcare facilities and resist conventional treatments. As a result, stringent hygiene and infection control measures are now paramount, especially given that transmission can occur through contact with contaminated surfaces, equipment, or individuals carrying the fungus.

International authorities, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), have also classified Candida auris as among the 19 lethal fungi that pose significant threats globally. The WHO emphasises a stark reality: fungal infections often receive insufficient attention and resources, making accurate assessments of their impact and treatment resistance challenging. As Dr Hanan Balkhy, WHO Assistant Director-General for Antimicrobial Resistance, articulated, fungal infections are increasingly becoming a pressing public health issue, emerging alongside the ongoing bacterial antimicrobial resistance crisis.

Further exacerbating this situation is the looming threat presented by climate change. A recent study suggests that rising global temperatures may lead to the spread of other harmful fungi, such as Aspergillus, across Europe and potentially into the UK. This fungus, notorious for causing severe brain infections and negatively impacting livestock and crops, is likely to migrate northward from warmer regions, posing additional risks to public health. Dr. Norman van Rhijn from the University of Manchester highlighted the stark reality that changing environments could facilitate the emergence of novel fungal diseases over the next few decades.

While Candida auris underscores the growing challenge of antifungal resistance, it also illustrates the wider health implications of climate change. As the transformation of our planet affects disease patterns, the interplay between environmental changes and public health will require vigilant monitoring and proactive strategies. The rise of these opportunistic pathogens signals an urgent need for improved research funding, public health resources, and comprehensive infection prevention measures in healthcare settings to safeguard against this growing threat.

In conclusion, the cumulative impact of Candida auris and the potential spread of other lethal fungi require a rapid and coordinated response from healthcare authorities globally. As they work to understand and mitigate these threats, the intersection of environmental factors and infectious diseases must linger in the fore, compelling a reevaluation of how we approach public health in a changing world.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishstar.com/news/us-news/candidozyma-fungus-uk-health-35316176), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-report-volume-19-2025/hpr-volume-19-issue-3-news-27-march-2025)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishstar.com/news/us-news/candidozyma-fungus-uk-health-35316176), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-report-volume-19-2025/hpr-volume-19-issue-3-news-27-march-2025), [[3]](https://www.cdc.gov/candida-auris/index.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2607/13/3/652), [[5]](https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/the-latest-candida-auris-updates-challenges-prevention-strategies), [[6]](https://www.gideononline.com/blogs/candida-auris-c-auris-tackling-the-drug-resistant-fungal-threat/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.irishstar.com/news/us-news/candidozyma-fungus-uk-health-35316176), [[3]](https://www.cdc.gov/candida-auris/index.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2607/13/3/652)
* Paragraph 6 – [[6]](https://www.gideononline.com/blogs/candida-auris-c-auris-tackling-the-drug-resistant-fungal-threat/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishstar.com/news/us-news/candidozyma-fungus-uk-health-35316176> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-report-volume-19-2025/hpr-volume-19-issue-3-news-27-march-2025> - The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has reported an increase in Candida auris cases in England, particularly linked to hospital outbreaks. Between January 2013 and December 2024, 637 cases were reported, with a significant rise in 2024. The fungus poses a global health threat due to its resistance to many antifungal treatments and its ability to cause severe infections, including bloodstream infections. UKHSA is collaborating with NHS England to monitor and control the spread of C. auris in healthcare settings.
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/candida-auris/index.html> - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides comprehensive information on Candida auris, an emerging fungus that can cause severe, often multidrug-resistant infections. C. auris spreads easily among patients in healthcare facilities and has been reported in over 30 countries. The CDC offers guidance on reducing the risk of C. auris transmission, including screening patients, implementing infection control measures, and tracking cases to inform public health responses.
4. <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2607/13/3/652> - This study discusses the global spread of Candida auris, highlighting its emergence in over 60 countries and its classification as a critical priority pathogen by the World Health Organization. The research emphasizes the challenges in controlling C. auris due to its resistance to multiple antifungal agents and its ability to cause outbreaks in healthcare settings. The study calls for enhanced surveillance, improved infection control measures, and further research to address this growing threat.
5. <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/view/the-latest-candida-auris-updates-challenges-prevention-strategies> - This article provides updates on Candida auris, focusing on its multidrug resistance, clinical manifestations, and prevention strategies in healthcare settings. It reports a significant increase in C. auris cases in U.S. hospitals, with a 95% rise in infections. The piece discusses the challenges in diagnosing and treating C. auris infections, especially in immunocompromised patients, and emphasizes the importance of stringent infection control measures to prevent its spread.
6. <https://www.gideononline.com/blogs/candida-auris-c-auris-tackling-the-drug-resistant-fungal-threat/> - This blog post discusses the significance of Candida auris as a drug-resistant fungal threat, highlighting its impact on survival rates and the financial burden on healthcare systems. It notes that 30% to 60% of patients with invasive C. auris infections do not survive. The article also mentions the challenges in controlling the spread of C. auris due to its persistence in hospital environments and the need for enhanced infection control measures.
7. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/candida-auris/about/definition/tex-20482504> - The Mayo Clinic provides an overview of Candida auris, an emerging fungus that can cause serious and often fatal infections. First discovered in Japan in 2009, C. auris has spread to numerous countries, including the United States. The fungus is concerning in healthcare settings due to its ease of spread, resistance to drug therapy, and difficulty in treatment. The article emphasizes the importance of infection control measures to prevent its transmission.