



Tularemia
(*Francisella tularensis*)
Revision 5-26-15



Missouri Dept of Health and Senior Services (800) 392-0272 (24 hours)
State Public Health Laboratory (573) 751-3334 or (573) 522-1444

Remember that these samples may be highly infectious! Extreme caution should be taken in collecting, preparing for shipment and transporting any material suspected of being contaminated with a biological agent.

Specimen collection and transport

Clinical:

Tissue samples from humans (or animals) must be submitted frozen (-30 to -70°C.) Best samples for testing include liver, spleen, lungs or lymph node. If pneumonic tularemia is suspected, collect a sputum or bronchial/tracheal wash. They can be placed into any sterile container that seals well. Blood can also be cultured, but is seldom positive. The Missouri State Public Health Laboratory (MSPHL) does not routinely accept clinical specimens for identification. Exceptions can be made with prior approval from the DHSS and the MSPHL.

Reference cultures:

The MSPHL can also confirm or identify any organism isolated from another laboratory, which is suspected of being *F. tularensis*. Reference cultures should be submitted on an enriched chocolate slant.

Environmental samples:

At this time environmental sampling, if performed, would be situation specific. No standardized testing procedures are available. Consult the MSPHL.

Testing available:

Culture, isolate identification, DFA, and PCR.

Reporting:

All reporting times are the minimum time. Any individual specimen could take longer.

F. tularensis is a very slow-growing organism. Primary isolation from a clinical specimen may take 3-5 days. The MSPHL can perform an FA and PCR directly on tissue specimens. This could be completed within 4-5 hours after receipt of the specimen in the lab. Confirmation of a suspect organism

isolated at another laboratory by direct FA and PCR can be completed within 2-3 hours of receipt in the MSPHL.