

Tularemia (*Francisella tularensis*)

Louisiana Office of Public Health Laboratory Services (LA SPHL) (504) 219-4664 or (504) 219-4646, 24 Hour Number (504) 458-9537

**Louisiana Office of Public Health Infectious Disease Epidemiology
(800) 256-2748 (24 hours)**

Remember that these samples may be highly infective! 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:

Acceptable specimens include: blood, biopsied tissue, scraping or aspirate placed into a sterile container. Add several drops of sterile normal saline to keep tissues moist. Swabs of lesions should be placed into a swab transport carrier. Samples should be kept cold (2-8°C), not frozen and transported to the LA SPHL as quickly as possible.

Reference cultures:

The LA SPHL 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 LA SPHL.

Testing available:

Culture, isolate identification, Direct Fluorescent Antibody (DFA), real-time Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR), and rapid antigen detection by Time Resolved Fluorescence (TRF).

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 LA SPHL can perform a DFA and TRF directly on tissue specimens. This could be completed within 2-4 hours after receipt of the specimen in the lab. Confirmation of a suspect organism isolated at another laboratory by direct DFA and TRF can be completed within 1-2 hours of receipt in the LA SPHL.