

To: <<Recipient Name>>, <Recipient Company>>

Fax number: <<Recipient FAX>>

City and County of San Francisco

San Francisco Department of Public Health



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www.sfdph.org/cdcp

ENVIRONMENTAL DETECTION OF *F. TULARENSIS* IN SAN JOSE ADVISORY

OCTOBER 31, 2005

On Sunday evening, October 30, 2005, the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) was notified that a sample collected earlier in the day from a Santa Clara County BioWatch environmental air monitor detected low levels of *Francisella tularensis* DNA via polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing. BioWatch is a federal program that routinely collects air samples and tests them for trace amounts of DNA. To date, no other Bay Area BioWatch sampling sites have tested positive. Multiple follow-up tests at the site of the Santa Clara County environmental collector were also negative. There are no known recently confirmed human or animal cases of tularemia in the Bay Area.

This single detection most likely represents DNA from an organism naturally occurring in the environment. BioWatch detectors at other sites across the country have signaled positive for *F. tularensis*. Local and regional surveillance following those signals detected no human or animal disease. As a precaution, Bay Area health departments request enhanced surveillance to ensure detection of any possible cases of tularemia.

This advisory and additional information on tularemia is posted on the SFDPH website: www.sfdph.org/cdcp

ACTIONS REQUESTED OF ALL CLINICIANS

1. Review signs, symptoms, and treatment of tularemia at: www.sfdph.org/cdcp.
2. Maintain an index of suspicion for tularemia.
3. Report suspected cases of tularemia (as detailed below) immediately to Disease Control: (415) 554-2830.
4. Consider testing symptomatic individuals following lab protocol below.

WHAT TO REPORT

Please report immediately to SFDPH Disease Control (415) 554-2830 if you see a patient who:

- 1) visited San Jose between October 28-30th
- 2) has onset of illness between October 31 and November 13, and
- 3) has an acute unexplained febrile illness, associated with at least one of the following:
 - Conjunctivitis with preauricular lymphadenopathy (oculoglandular)
 - Stomatitis or pharyngitis or tonsillitis and cervical lymphadenopathy (oropharyngeal)
 - Cough, shortness of breath, pleuritic chest pain (pneumonic)

LAB TESTING

Appropriate specimens for tularemia testing could include blood (EDTA lavender top), sputum or pleural fluid aspirate (for pneumonic tularemia), or biopsy specimens, scraping or swab (for cutaneous tularemia).

Traditional identification of *F. tularensis* uses culture techniques. PCR testing is a more recent and more rapid method of laboratory confirmation. Submit appropriate specimens to your clinical lab for culture and for potential PCR testing at the public health laboratory system. Contact Disease Control at (415) 554-2830 to discuss additional testing.