



PLAGUE

Protocol Overview and Methods:

The causative agent of Plague is the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, a short, aerobic, gram-negative bacillus. The organism grows within 48 to 72 hours of culture at 35-37°C, but will grow faster at room temperature.

The Delaware Public Health Laboratory (DPHL) can test for *Yersinia pestis* using culture and molecular real time polymerase chain reaction (qPCR) methods.

Culture methods are used to grow the organism on agar plates. Biochemical testing and other methods can be performed to rule out or confirm *Yersinia pestis*.

- Molecular methods are used to detect specific segments of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) that these organisms contain. If present, DNA segments from *Yersinia pestis* are amplified until there is a sufficient quantity for the instrument to detect. **Any positive qPCR result is considered preliminary until a positive culture result is obtained.**

Contact Information:

DPHL Director: 302-223-1520. Answering service is available at the same number during non-business hours.

For More Information:

24/7 CDC Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156

<http://www.cdc.gov/az/>