The 5 I’s are Used in a Food Poisoning Outbreak Case Study

One August morning in 2008**,** a large proportion of the inmates at a Wisconsin county jail awoke complaining of nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. The local health department suspected an outbreak of foodborne illness, and along with the Wisconsin Division of Public Health, initiated an investigation.

Because of the strict routine and controlled environment of prison life, it was relatively easy to find out what the inmates had eaten in the past 24 hours and how their food had been prepared. A written questionnaire distributed to the inmates revealed 194 probable cases of food intoxication. Four respondents commented on the unusual taste of the casserole they had eaten the night before, which contained macaroni, ground beef, ground turkey, frozen vegetables, and gravy. Stool samples were obtained from six symptomatic inmates and cultured for the presence of pathogenic bacteria.

* What five basic techniques are used to identify a microorganism in the laboratory?
* What types of media might a lab technician use to differentiate bacteria from one another?