

Nocardiosis is an infectious pulmonary disease characterized by abscesses in the lungs. These abscesses may extend through the chest wall. The infection is spread through the body via the bloodstream by a microorganism called *Nocardia asteroides*. Physical examination usually reveals decreased breath sounds in the lungs and crackles or rales in the infected lung. Cultures of the sputum and/or the fluid in the lungs will prove positive for the *Nocardia* bacteria. Chest X-rays, CT scans and viewing the lungs through an optical filament (bronchoscopy) can confirm the diagnosis and determine whether abscesses are present.