American College of Radiology
ACR Appropriateness Criteria®

Suspected Osteomyelitis, Septic Arthritis, or Soft Tissue Infection (Excluding Spine and Diabetic Foot)

Variant 1:  Suspected osteomyelitis, septic arthritis, or soft-tissue infection (excluding spine and diabetic foot). First study.

<table>
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<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Appropriateness Category</th>
<th>SOE</th>
<th>Adults RRL</th>
<th>Peds RRL</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Final Tabulations</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Varies</td>
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Variant 2:  Soft-tissue or juxta-articular swelling. Suspected soft-tissue infection. Additional imaging following radiographs.

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<th>Peds RRL</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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Variant 3:  Soft-tissue or juxta-articular swelling with a history of puncture wound. Suspected foreign body. Negative radiographs.
CT area of interest without and with IV contrast

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<th>Appropriateness Category</th>
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<th>Peds RRL</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Final Tabulations</th>
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<tr>
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<td>O 0 mSv [ped]</td>
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<tr>
<td>CT area of interest with IV contrast</td>
<td>Usually appropriate</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Varies</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRI area of interest without IV contrast</td>
<td>Usually appropriate</td>
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<td>O 0 mSv [ped]</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>May be appropriate</td>
<td>☢☢☢☢ 10-30 mSv</td>
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<tr>
<td>CT area of interest without IV contrast</td>
<td>May be appropriate</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Varies</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
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<td>Varies</td>
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<tr>
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Variant 4: Soft-tissue or juxta-articular swelling with cellulitis and a skin lesion, injury, wound, ulcer, or blister. Suspected osteomyelitis. Additional imaging following radiographs.
### Variant 5: Soft-tissue or juxta-articular swelling with a history of prior surgery. Suspected osteomyelitis or septic arthritis. Additional imaging following radiographs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Appropriateness Category</th>
<th>SOE</th>
<th>Adults RRL</th>
<th>Peds RRL</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Final Tabulations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WBC scan area of interest</td>
<td>Usually not appropriate</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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**MRI area of interest without and with IV contrast**

- **SOE:** Adults RRL
- **Ratings:** 9
- **Median:** n/a
- **Tabulations:**
  - 1: 0
  - 2: 0
  - 3: 0
  - 4: 0
  - 5: 0
  - 6: 0
  - 7: 0
  - 8: 0
  - 9: 0

**Aspiration area of interest**

- **SOE:** Adults RRL
- **Ratings:** 9
- **Median:** n/a
- **Tabulations:**
  - 1: 0
  - 2: 0
  - 3: 0
  - 4: 0
  - 5: 0
  - 6: 0
  - 7: 0
  - 8: 0
  - 9: 0

**MRI area of interest without IV contrast**

- **SOE:** Adults RRL
- **Ratings:** 7
- **Median:** n/a
- **Tabulations:**
  - 1: 0
  - 2: 0
  - 3: 0
  - 4: 0
  - 5: 0
  - 6: 0
  - 7: 0
  - 8: 0
  - 9: 0

**CT area of interest with IV contrast**

- **SOE:** Adults RRL
- **Ratings:** 6
- **Median:** n/a
- **Tabulations:**
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  - 2: 0
  - 3: 0
  - 4: 0
  - 5: 0
  - 6: 0
  - 7: 0
  - 8: 0
  - 9: 0

**CT area of interest without IV contrast**

- **SOE:** Adults RRL
- **Ratings:** 5
- **Median:** n/a
- **Tabulations:**
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  - 2: 0
  - 3: 0
  - 4: 0
  - 5: 0
  - 6: 0
  - 7: 0
  - 8: 0
  - 9: 0

**WBC scan and sulfur colloid scan area of interest**

- **SOE:** Adults RRL
- **Ratings:** 5
- **Median:** n/a
- **Tabulations:**
  - 1: 0
  - 2: 0
  - 3: 0
  - 4: 0
  - 5: 0
  - 6: 0
  - 7: 0
  - 8: 0
  - 9: 0

**3-phase bone scan and WBC scan area of interest**

- **SOE:** Adults RRL
- **Ratings:** 2
- **Median:** n/a
- **Tabulations:**
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  - 2: 0
  - 3: 0
  - 4: 0
  - 5: 0
  - 6: 0
  - 7: 0
  - 8: 0
  - 9: 0

**WBC scan area of interest**

- **SOE:** Adults RRL
- **Ratings:** 2
- **Median:** n/a
- **Tabulations:**
  - 1: 0
  - 2: 0
  - 3: 0
  - 4: 0
  - 5: 0
  - 6: 0
  - 7: 0
  - 8: 0
  - 9: 0

**CT area of interest without and with IV contrast**

- **SOE:** Adults RRL
- **Ratings:** 1
- **Median:** n/a
- **Tabulations:**
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  - 2: 0
  - 3: 0
  - 4: 0
  - 5: 0
  - 6: 0
  - 7: 0
  - 8: 0
  - 9: 0

**US area of interest**

- **SOE:** Adults RRL
- **Ratings:** 1
- **Median:** n/a
- **Tabulations:**
  - 1: 0
  - 2: 0
  - 3: 0
  - 4: 0
  - 5: 0
  - 6: 0
  - 7: 0
  - 8: 0
  - 9: 0
### 3-phase bone scan area of interest
- Usually not appropriate
- ☢☢☢ 1-10 mSv
- ☢☢☢☢ 3-10 mSv [ped]

### FDG-PET/CT area of interest
- Usually not appropriate
- ☢☢☢☢ 10-30 mSv

### 3-phase bone scan and WBC scan and sulfur colloid scan area of interest
- Usually not appropriate
- ☢☢☢☢ 10-30 mSv

### Variant 6: Pain and swelling or cellulitis associated with site of previous nonarthroplasty hardware. Suspected osteomyelitis or septic arthritis. Additional imaging following radiographs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Appropriateness Category</th>
<th>SOE</th>
<th>Adults RRL</th>
<th>Peds RRL [ped]</th>
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### Procedure Details

#### Variant 7: Draining sinus (not associated with a joint prosthesis). Suspected osteomyelitis. Additional imaging following radiographs.

<table>
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<th>Appropriateness Category</th>
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#### Variant 8: Clinical examination suggesting crepitus. Suspected soft-tissue gas. First study.
<table>
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<th>Appropriateness Category</th>
<th>SOE</th>
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<th>Peds RRL</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Final Tabulations</th>
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<td>Varies</td>
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<td>MRI area of interest without IV contrast</td>
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<td>O 0 mSv [ped]</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
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<td>MRI area of interest with and with IV contrast</td>
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<td>O 0 mSv [ped]</td>
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</table>

**Variant 9:** Initial radiographs showing soft-tissue gas in absence of puncture wound.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Appropriateness Category</th>
<th>SOE</th>
<th>Adults RRL</th>
<th>Peds RRL</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Median</th>
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<tr>
<td>CT area of interest without IV contrast</td>
<td>May be appropriate</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>CT area of interest with IV contrast</td>
<td>May be appropriate</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRI area of interest without IV contrast</td>
<td>May be appropriate</td>
<td>O 0 mSv</td>
<td>O 0 mSv [ped]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRI area of interest without and with IV contrast</td>
<td>May be appropriate</td>
<td>0 0 mSv</td>
<td>0 0 mSv [ped]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT area of interest without and with IV contrast</td>
<td>Usually not appropriate</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US area of interest</td>
<td>Usually not appropriate</td>
<td>0 0 mSv</td>
<td>0 0 mSv [ped]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix Key

A more complete discussion of the items presented below can be found by accessing the supporting documents at the designated hyperlinks.

**Appropriateness Category**: The panel's recommendation for a procedure based on the assessment of the risks and benefits of performing the procedure for the specified clinical scenario.

**SOE**: Strength of Evidence. The assessment of the amount and quality of evidence found in the peer reviewed medical literature for an appropriateness recommendation.

- **References**: The citation number and PMID for the reference(s) associated with the recommendation.
- **Study Quality**: The assessment of the quality of an individual reference based on the number of study quality elements described in the reference.

**RRL**: Relative Radiation Level. A population based assessment of the amount of radiation a typical patient may be exposed to during the specified procedure.

**Rating**: The final rating (1-9 scale) for the procedure as determined by the panel during rating rounds.

**Median**: The median rating (1-9 scale) for the procedure as determined by the panel during rating rounds.

**Final tabulations**: A histogram showing the number of panel members who rated the procedure as noted in the column heading (ie, 1, 2, 3, etc.).

Additional supporting documents about the AC methodology and processes can be found at [www.acr.org/ac](http://www.acr.org/ac).