

**American College of Radiology  
ACR Appropriateness Criteria®**

**Chronic Cough**

**Variant 1: Chronic cough lasting more than 8 weeks. No known risk factors for lung cancer. Initial imaging.**

| Procedure                 | Appropriateness Category | SOE           | Adults RRL   | Peds RRL            | Rating | Median | Final Tabulations |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------|--------|--------|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|                           |                          |               |              |                     |        |        | 1                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Radiography chest         | Usually appropriate      | Strong        | ⊕ <0.1 mSv   | ⊕ <0.03 mSv [ped]   | 9      | 9      | 0                 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 8 |
|                           |                          | References    |              | Study Quality       |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 34 (23083885) |              | 3                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 30 (24788998) |              | 4                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 32 (25968285) |              | 4                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 29 (20694945) |              | 4                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 10 (26165783) |              | 4                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 3 (29960277)  |              | 2                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 16 (26937758) |              | 4                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 15 (31757237) |              | 4                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 26 (26861744) |              | 2                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 33 (26662264) |              | 2                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 31 (25316135) |              | 2                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 35 (24698073) |              | 4                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 1 (29080708)  |              | 4                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 7 (15684286)  |              | 2                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                           |                          | 17 (23347748) |              | 2                   |        |        |                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| CT chest with IV contrast | May be appropriate       | Strong        | ⊕⊕⊕ 1-10 mSv | ⊕⊕⊕⊕ 3-10 mSv [ped] | 4      | 4      | 2                 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

| References    | Study Quality |
|---------------|---------------|
| 39 (19926869) | 3             |
| 32 (25968285) | 4             |
| 29 (20694945) | 4             |
| 10 (26165783) | 4             |
| 3 (29960277)  | 2             |
| 16 (26937758) | 4             |
| 40 (22795504) | 4             |
| 36 (21461855) | 2             |
| 15 (31757237) | 4             |
| 4 (21127394)  | 2             |
| 37 (28298729) | 4             |
| 38 (26246280) | 4             |
| 42 (25731735) | 2             |
| 41 (24922562) | 2             |
| 35 (24698073) | 4             |
| 6 (12461244)  | 2             |
| 1 (29080708)  | 4             |
| 7 (15684286)  | 2             |
| 17 (23347748) | 2             |

|                              |                    |        |              |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------------|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CT chest without IV contrast | May be appropriate | Strong | ☢☢☢ 1-10 mSv | ☢☢☢☢ 3-10 mSv [ped] | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------------|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| References    | Study Quality |
|---------------|---------------|
| 39 (19926869) | 3             |
| 32 (25968285) | 4             |
| 29 (20694945) | 4             |
| 10 (26165783) | 4             |
| 3 (29960277)  | 2             |
| 16 (26937758) | 4             |
| 40 (22795504) | 4             |
| 36 (21461855) | 2             |

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 15 (31757237) | 4 |
| 4 (21127394)  | 2 |
| 37 (28298729) | 4 |
| 38 (26246280) | 4 |
| 42 (25731735) | 2 |
| 41 (24922562) | 2 |
| 35 (24698073) | 4 |
| 6 (12461244)  | 2 |
| 1 (29080708)  | 4 |
| 7 (15684286)  | 2 |
| 17 (23347748) | 2 |

|                                       |                         |        |              |                      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|--------------|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CT chest without and with IV contrast | Usually not appropriate | Strong | ☢☢☢ 1-10 mSv | ☢☢☢☢☢ 3-10 mSv [ped] | 1 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|--------------|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| References    | Study Quality |
|---------------|---------------|
| 39 (19926869) | 3             |
| 32 (25968285) | 4             |
| 29 (20694945) | 4             |
| 10 (26165783) | 4             |
| 3 (29960277)  | 2             |
| 16 (26937758) | 4             |
| 40 (22795504) | 4             |
| 36 (21461855) | 2             |
| 15 (31757237) | 4             |
| 4 (21127394)  | 2             |
| 37 (28298729) | 4             |
| 38 (26246280) | 4             |
| 42 (25731735) | 2             |
| 41 (24922562) | 2             |
| 35 (24698073) | 4             |
| 6 (12461244)  | 2             |
| 1 (29080708)  | 4             |

|                                        |                         |               |                |                     |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------------|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|                                        |                         | 7 (15684286)  |                | 2                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 17 (23347748) |                | 2                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| MRI chest without IV contrast          | Usually not appropriate | Strong        | 0 0 mSv        | 0 0 mSv [ped]       | 1 | 1 | 7  | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|                                        |                         | References    |                | Study Quality       |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 45 (27337056) |                | 2                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 47 (26223818) |                | 2                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 29 (20694945) |                | 4                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 10 (26165783) |                | 4                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 15 (31757237) |                | 4                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 48 (29271239) |                | 4                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 46 (26154442) |                | 2                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 35 (24698073) |                | 4                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 44 (24608108) |                | 4                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 1 (29080708)  |                | 4                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| MRI chest without and with IV contrast | Usually not appropriate | Strong        | 0 0 mSv        | 0 0 mSv [ped]       | 1 | 1 | 7  | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|                                        |                         | References    |                | Study Quality       |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 45 (27337056) |                | 2                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 47 (26223818) |                | 2                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 29 (20694945) |                | 4                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 10 (26165783) |                | 4                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 15 (31757237) |                | 4                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 48 (29271239) |                | 4                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 46 (26154442) |                | 2                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 35 (24698073) |                | 4                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 44 (24608108) |                | 4                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                        |                         | 1 (29080708)  |                | 4                   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| FDG-PET/CT skull base to mid-thigh     | Usually not appropriate | Limited       | ☢☢☢☢ 10-30 mSv | ☢☢☢☢ 3-10 mSv [ped] | 1 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|                                        |                         | References    |                | Study Quality       |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 43 (25030279) | 4 |
| 1 (29080708)  | 4 |

**Variant 2: Chronic cough lasting more than 8 weeks. Increased risk for lung cancer. Initial imaging.**

| Procedure         | Appropriateness Category | SOE    | Adults RRL | Peds RRL          | Rating | Median | Final Tabulations |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------|------------|-------------------|--------|--------|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|                   |                          |        |            |                   |        |        | 1                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Radiography chest | Usually appropriate      | Strong | ⊕ <0.1 mSv | ⊕ <0.03 mSv [ped] | 9      | 9      | 0                 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 8 |

| References    | Study Quality |
|---------------|---------------|
| 25 (21714641) | 3             |
| 51 (24131487) | 4             |
| 50 (28108179) | 4             |
| 3 (29960277)  | 2             |
| 16 (26937758) | 4             |
| 36 (21461855) | 2             |
| 33 (26662264) | 2             |
| 31 (25316135) | 2             |
| 1 (29080708)  | 4             |
| 7 (15684286)  | 2             |
| 17 (23347748) | 2             |
| 49 (28142680) | 2             |

|                              |                    |        |              |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------------|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CT chest without IV contrast | May be appropriate | Strong | ⊕⊕⊕ 1-10 mSv | ⊕⊕⊕⊕ 3-10 mSv [ped] | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------------|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| References    | Study Quality |
|---------------|---------------|
| 25 (21714641) | 3             |
| 51 (24131487) | 4             |
| 53 (27542423) | 4             |
| 29 (20694945) | 4             |
| 13 (29094873) | 4             |





**Variant 3: Chronic cough lasting more than 8 weeks. Persistent symptoms despite initial clinical evaluation and empiric treatment. Initial imaging.**

| Procedure                 | Appropriateness Category | SOE    | Adults RRL   | Peds RRL            | Rating | Median | Final Tabulations |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------|--------------|---------------------|--------|--------|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|                           |                          |        |              |                     |        |        | 1                 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| CT chest with IV contrast | Usually appropriate      | Strong | ☼☼☼ 1-10 mSv | ☼☼☼☼ 3-10 mSv [ped] | 7      | 7      | 0                 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |

[illegible]



|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 29 (20694945) | 4 |
| 3 (29960277)  | 2 |
| 16 (26937758) | 4 |
| 40 (22795504) | 4 |
| 4 (21127394)  | 2 |
| 5 (26184784)  | 4 |
| 46 (26154442) | 2 |
| 31 (25316135) | 2 |
| 27 (23122673) | 2 |
| 2 (17285786)  | 2 |
| 6 (12461244)  | 2 |
| 1 (29080708)  | 4 |
| 7 (15684286)  | 2 |
| 17 (23347748) | 2 |
| 54 (-3191717) | 4 |

|                                      |                     |                  |             |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Radiography chest                    | Usually appropriate | Expert Consensus | ☼ <0.1 mSv  | ☼ <0.03 mSv [ped]   | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| CT maxillofacial without IV contrast | May be appropriate  | Strong           | ☼☼ 0.1-1mSv | ☼☼☼ 0.3-3 mSv [ped] | 5 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| References    | Study Quality |
|---------------|---------------|
| 53 (27542423) | 4             |
| 58 (29121436) | 2             |
| 16 (26937758) | 4             |
| 56 (21853442) | 2             |
| 57 (29202870) | 2             |
| 12 (22287379) | 2             |
| 55 (22287369) | 2             |
| 2 (17285786)  | 2             |
| 1 (29080708)  | 4             |
| 7 (15684286)  | 2             |



[illegible]

|                                                                |                         |                  |                |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|                                                                |                         | 1 (29080708)     | 4              |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                                                |                         | 7 (15684286)     | 2              |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                                                |                         | 17 (23347748)    | 2              |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                                                |                         | 54 (-3191717)    | 4              |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| MRI heart function and morphology without and with IV contrast | Usually not appropriate | Limited          | O 0 mSv        | O 0 mSv [ped]         | 1 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|                                                                |                         | References       | Study Quality  |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                                                |                         | 1 (29080708)     | 4              |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| V/Q scan lung                                                  | Usually not appropriate | Strong           | ☼☼☼ 1-10 mSv   | ☼☼☼ 0.3-3 mSv [ped]   | 1 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|                                                                |                         | References       | Study Quality  |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                                                |                         | 16 (26937758)    | 4              |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                                                |                         | 2 (17285786)     | 2              |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                                                |                         | 7 (15684286)     | 2              |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                                                |                         | 17 (23347748)    | 2              |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| FDG-PET/CT skull base to mid-thigh                             | Usually not appropriate | Strong           | ☼☼☼☼ 10-30 mSv | ☼☼☼☼ 3-10 mSv [ped]   | 1 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|                                                                |                         | References       | Study Quality  |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                                                |                         | 60 (19289428)    | 3              |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                                                |                         | 43 (25030279)    | 4              |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                                                |                         | 61 (30152649)    | 2              |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                                                |                         | 62 (23942907)    | 2              |                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| SPECT or SPECT/CT MPI rest and stress                          | Usually not appropriate | Expert Consensus | ☼☼☼☼ 10-30 mSv | ☼☼☼☼☼ 10-30 mSv [ped] | 1 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

## **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).