



American College of
Emergency Physicians®

ADVANCING EMERGENCY CARE 

POLICY STATEMENT

Approved January 2024

Opposition to Routine Culturing of Skin and Soft Tissue Abscesses

Reaffirmed January 2024

Revised February 2018

Originated as CR18 and
approved as a policy
statement titled "Opposition
to Routine Abscess Culturing"
October 2012

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) opposes any recommendation and/or requirement that skin and soft tissue abscesses be cultured routinely.

Consider obtaining abscess cultures in selected patients, including patients with signs and symptoms of systemic illness, recurrent infection, or immunosuppression.

ACEP is supportive of notifying patients with positive cultures; however, ACEP opposes federal or state legislation and/or regulation that requires an attending physician to be the person who contacts and notifies patients of positive cultures.