

PubMed

What is PubMed?

PubMed is a searchable interface for the MEDLINE database. It contains over 14 million citations for biomedical articles dating back to the 1950's. When available, PubMed provides links to sites that provide full-text articles and other related resources. Common uses of PubMed include retrieving citations and abstracts to clinical articles; investigating for therapies and prognosis; and searching for clinical trial information.

To Access PubMed:

- Go to the library's website, <http://www.bcc.ctc.edu/lmc/>
- Click on "Periodicals/Databases"
- Click on the PubMed icon.
- You can also access PubMed directly: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed/>

How to Search PubMed:

Limit Your Results - since there are millions of records in PubMed, it is a good idea to limit your search so you don't get overwhelmed!

- Click on "Limits" on the features bar (near the top of the search page).
- Use the pull-down lists to restrict your search. For example, English language, Human research (excludes animal research), Nursing Journals.

Topic Search

- Enter search term in search box, e.g. *asthma therapy; diabetes* (see MeSH section below for more help).
- Press enter or click "Go".
- PubMed automatically combines terms together. For example, if you enter asthma drug therapy in to the search box, PubMed searches "*drug therapy*" as a phrase. If you do not want any terms searched as a phrase, enter each term separated by AND, e.g., "*asthma AND drug AND therapy.*"

MeSH (Medical Subject Headings) - MeSH is the acronym for Medical Subject Headings. You can search MeSH to find the precise way a particular term or phrase is listed in PubMed. For example, "heart attack" is indexed as "myocardial infarction." Searching PubMed by selecting the term as it is entered in MeSH will help ensure that you get the most accurate results.

To access MeSH:

- In the search box, use the pull-down list to select "MeSH"
- Or, you can click on "MeSH Database" found on the left side of the page

Advanced Searching:

Boolean Operators - combine search terms with Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT – must be entered in upper case) to refine your search.

- Use **AND** to expand your search, e.g., arthritis AND children
- Use **OR** to find synonyms, e.g., Rhodesia OR Zimbabwe; however using the OR operator is not always necessary since PubMed automatically matches the search terms against the MeSH translation tables. For example, if you search for “vitamin h” in the query box, PubMed will automatically translate this search to: ("Biotin"[MeSH Terms] OR vitamin h[Text Word]). Vitamin H is an entry term for the MeSH term, Biotin.
- Use **NOT** to narrow your search by excluding a term, e.g., chicken pox NOT children
- You can combine **AND**, **OR**, and **NOT** into one search statement, e.g., South Africa AND (AIDS or HIV). Always use parenthesis to separate the different parts of the search statement.

Truncation – use an asterisk (*) at the end of a search term to prompt PubMed to retrieve variant endings of that word. For example, *ultraso** retrieves *ultrasound* or *ultrasonography*. *Be careful using truncation because it may yield too many results!* Truncating a common root like “cat*” will retrieve lots of hits (everything from catabolic to catalyze). In those instances it would be best to use the Boolean operator “or.”

Refining your search – The “History” button displays the most recent search results. Click on “History” to combine previous searches or add additional terms by using the pound sign (#). For example, you may want to combine your second and fourth queries. If so, enter “#2 AND #4” into the search box.

Additional Features of PubMed:

PubMed Central – provides a list of journals that provide full-text articles. A link to PubMed Central is found on the left hand side on the page.

Journal Searching – you can find the complete name of a journal whose abbreviation you have by searching PubMed’s Journal Database. Open the Journal Browser feature, enter the abbreviation, and click “Go.”

Related Articles – if you find an article that best matches your search, you can click on the “related articles” link (located on the right side) to find similar articles.

Clipboard – The clipboard is a tool you can use to collect the search results you want to keep. Put a check in the box found to the left of the article number. The clipboard can hold as many as 500 items, but be aware that all items will be lost after 8 hours of inactivity.

Printing your results – check the items in the list you are interesting in using. Click on the “Send to” button and highlight “Text.” Do a print preview, then print. To print selected items from more than one search, collect the items in the clipboard first.

For More Help:

- PubMed FAQs - <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query/static/faq.html>
- PubMed Tutorial - http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/pubmed_tutorial/m1001.html