

Searching the PubMed Database

Available from www.pubmed.gov, PubMed is a free, web-based interface for searching the Medline Database. PubMed indexes over 19 million citations from a range of biomedical journals.

- If you have an **NHS Athens** or **UCL** username and password please visit <http://www.archway.ac.uk/AHL/pubmed.html> and follow the appropriate link for access to a range of additional fulltext articles via the PubMed database.
- If you want to return to the PubMed home page at any point please click on the PubMed logo.



As with any Database, you should search PubMed by first identifying the **keywords** within your question. Once the keywords have been identified you need to decide which search option would be most suitable for your needs. This will depend on your reasons for searching PubMed and the type of evidence/information you are hoping to find.

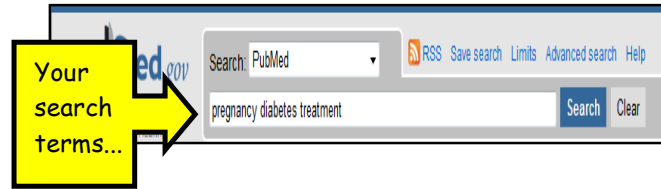
Some things to remember when identifying your keywords:

- **Synonyms** such as: stroke/CVA/cerebral vascular accident
- **Variant spellings** such as: foetus/fetus (remember different American usage) where you will need to enter both variants
- **Plural and adjectival forms** such as: hormone/hormones/hormonal where you will need to enter all possible forms or use the truncation symbol (*); **hormon*** will retrieve all words beginning with this root
- **Broader/narrower** concepts: think of broader and more specialist terms such as: antibiotic*/penicillin*

The screenshot shows the PubMed.gov homepage. At the top left is the PubMed.gov logo and the text 'U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health'. A search bar contains the text 'PubMed'. To the right of the search bar are links for 'Advanced search' and 'Help', and buttons for 'Search' and 'Clear'. Below the search bar is a 'Welcome to PubMed' banner with a text box stating: 'PubMed comprises more than 19 million citations for biomedical articles from MEDLINE and life science journals. Citations may include links to full-text articles from PubMed Central or publisher web sites.' At the bottom, there are three columns of links: 'Using PubMed' (PubMed Quick Start, New and Noteworthy, PubMed Tutorials, Full Text Articles, PubMed FAQs), 'PubMed Tools' (Single Citation Matcher, Batch Citation Matcher, Clinical Queries, Topic-Specific Queries), and 'More Resources' (MeSH Database, Journals Database, Clinical Trials, E-Utilities, LinkOut). Three yellow arrows with black outlines point to specific elements: one to the search bar labeled 'Basic / Keyword search', one to the 'Advanced search' link labeled 'Advanced search', and one to the 'MeSH search' link in the 'More Resources' section labeled 'MeSH search'.

Basic keyword search:

PubMed automatically combines searches with AND in the keyword search. In the example opposite we typed in “pregnancy diabetes treatment”. The search looks for your keywords in exactly the form you enter them, but it also carries out some additional searching behind the scenes, for example attempting to match the term(s) to the appropriate MeSH headings (for more on MeSH see below). If you need to see exactly what your search has covered, look for the search details box (on the right-hand side of the screen).



MeSH search:

Some searches in PubMed will give good results immediately (see above) whereas for others you will need to carry out several searches and combine them. All records in the PubMed Database are given Medical Subject Headings (MeSH). These headings provide a consistent way to search, ensuring that all relevant records are retrieved for a particular concept, even if different authors might use different words to describe it. For example, searching for the records with the MeSH term stroke will retrieve records where the author has used a range of terms such as cerebrovascular accident.

This function also allows you to build a search strategy; searching for two or more terms/concepts and combining them with **AND**, **OR** or **NOT**.

AND retrieves records which contain **all** of your search terms, for example stroke **AND** aspirin

OR retrieves records which contain **any** of your search terms – use it when you search for synonymous terms, for example MMR **OR** measles, mumps and rubella

NOT ensures records containing the second term are excluded, for example leukaemia **NOT** child*

If your search is detailed or complex we recommend that you search each term separately, and then use the Advanced search option, which shows your search history, to make combinations of the separate searches.

To carry out a search in the MeSH Database you need to click on the MeSH Database link on the front page under ‘More Resources’.

Search MeSH for pregnancy [Go] [Clear] [Save Search]

Limits Preview/Index History Clipboard Details

Display Summary Show 20 Send to

All: 90

Items 1 - 20 of 90 Page 1 of 5 Next

1: [Pregnancy](#) Links

The status during which female mammals carry their developing young (EMRYOS or FETUSES) in utero before birth, beginning from FERTILIZATION to BIRTH

Year introduced: 1963

[Pregnancy-Specific beta 1-Glycoproteins](#) Links

Glycoproteins with the electrophoretic mobility of BETA-GLOBULINS, secreted by the placental TROPHOBLASTS into the maternal bloodstream during PREGNANCY. They can be detected 18 days after OVULATION and reach 200 mg/ml at the end of pregnancy. They are associated with fetal well-being

Year introduced: 2005(1980)

3: [Pregnancy-Complications, Hematologic](#) Links

The co-occurrence of pregnancy and a blood disease (HEMATOLOGIC DISEASES) which involves BLOOD CELLS or COAGULATION FACTORS. The hematologic disease may precede or follow FERTILIZATION and it may or may not have a deleterious effect on the pregnant woman or FETUS.

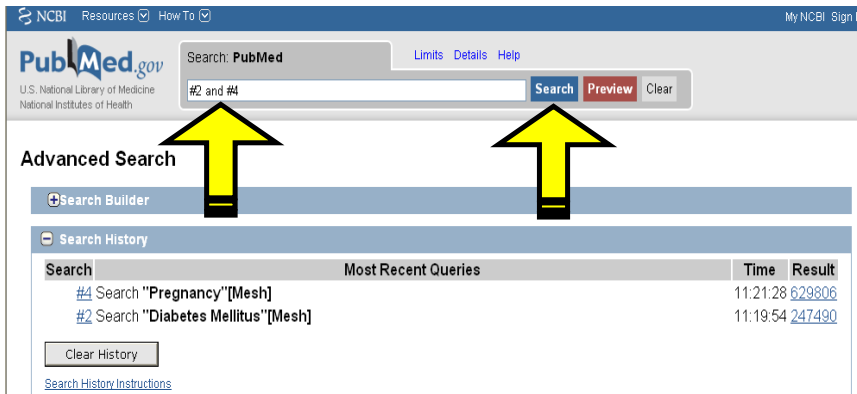
Year introduced: 1964

Step 1 – type in your search term

Step 2 – Click on Go

Step 3 – chose the appropriate MeSH term by ticking in the box

Step 4 – click on links and then PubMed. This will search for the records which have the heading you have selected.



Step 5 – if you have more MeSH searches to make, click on the PubMed logo to return to the home page and choose MeSH database again.

Step 6 – When you have done all of the searches you need to, you will be ready to make some

combinations. Go to the Advanced search option and then put your instruction in the box at the top of the screen. Think carefully about the combination you want to make, then use the search numbers listed in the history, for example #2 and #4. Click on search.

Limiting your search:

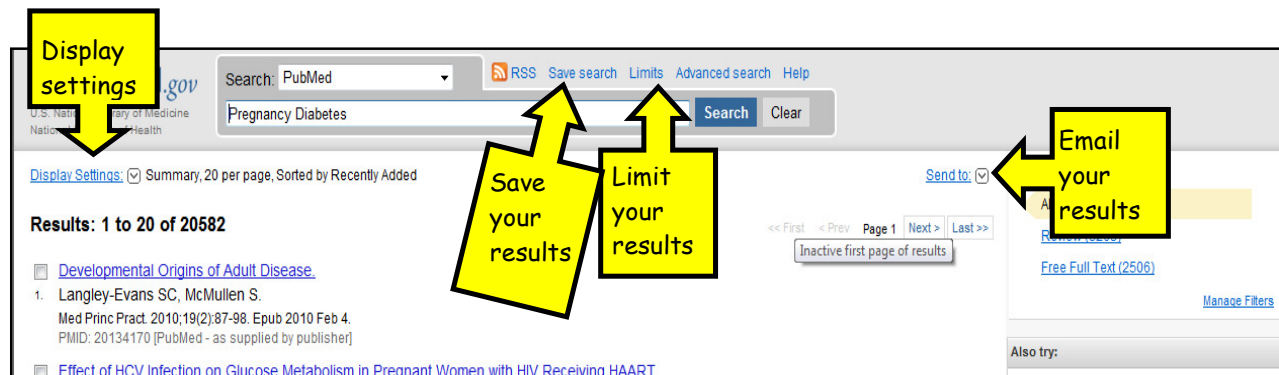
You can add a variety of limits or specifications to your search including 'Type of article', 'Gender', 'Ages' and 'Language'. This is particularly useful if you have retrieved a very large set of results. When you have added a limit a box appears on your screen offering you the chance to change your specification(s) or remove them altogether.



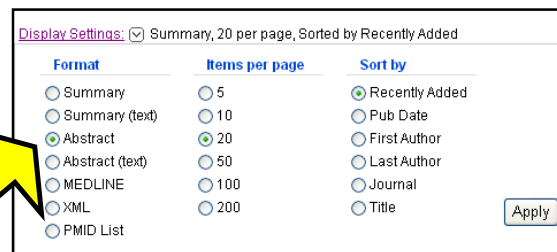
You can also use the Clinical Queries option from the PubMed homepage to focus your results on a particular area, for example on articles relating to therapy or diagnosis.

Viewing and managing your results

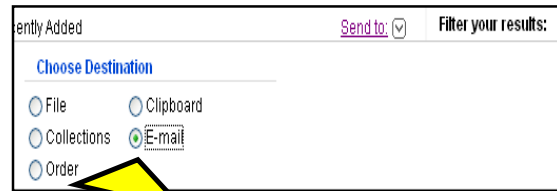
There are various options for organising your results once you have carried out your search.



It is recommended that you display your results in the 'Abstract' format. This gives you additional information to help you judge the relevance of the article to your question. This format will also display a full text icon if your institution has a subscription to that particular journal which you can then follow.



Send to: This allows you to export your references. Choosing **File** provides the option of saving or opening your results as a text (.txt) file. **E-mail** allows you to enter an address to which your list of references will be sent. Selecting **Clipboard** saves selected references for up to eight hours. Click the **Clipboard** tab to see all articles sent there. You can also print or e-mail results from the clipboard.

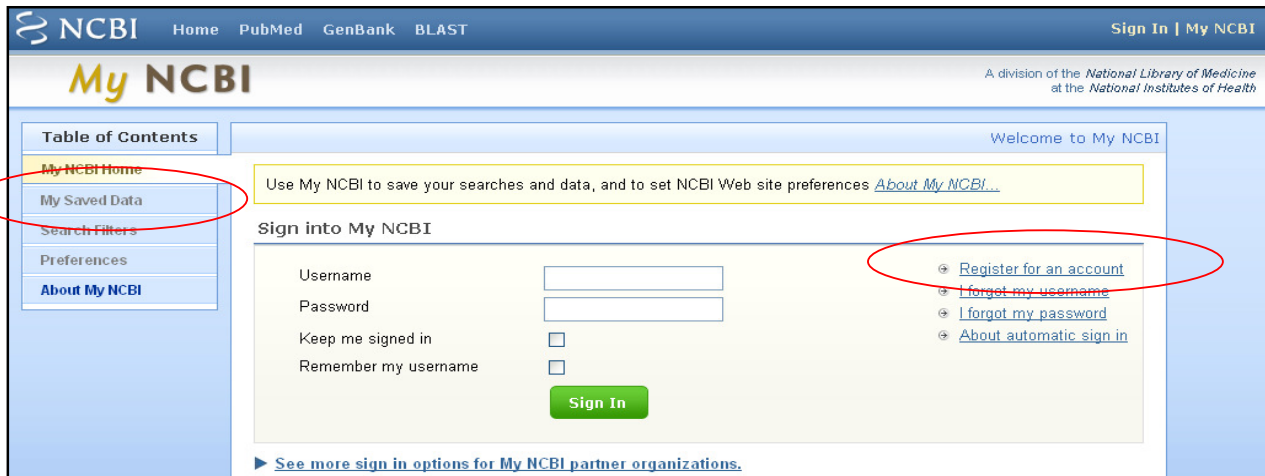


My NCBI and saving searches

My NCBI is a way of saving searches and data that you want to access again at a later date. You need to create a free account in order to utilise this function and you will be prompted to assign yourself a username and password. In the top right hand corner of your search page you will see the following link

[My NCBI | Sign In](#)

Having clicked on this link you will be re-directed to a sign in page. To create a new account you need to click on 'register for an account'.



Once registered you can save your searches and retrieve them at a later date by logging into My NCBI and choosing 'My Saved Data'.