

PubMed® Hints

Select the Search box and type in desired term(s). Select Go. PubMed will try to map your term(s) to related Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) as well as search for your term as a textword. If it does not find a MeSH term, it searches by textword. NOTE: Pubmed will AUTOMATICALLY Explode any MeSH terms.

The asterisk (*) is a truncation (or wild card) symbol. It is used to search for a term by its root. (e.g. hypertens* returns results with hypertension, hypertensive; child* returns child, children, childhood). NOTE: using this feature TURNS OFF mapping to MeSH terms.

To search specifically for MESH terms, go to the MeSH database (under the left-hand menu under “PubMed Services”). Enter the term; select Go. MeSH will return a list of terms; select the relevant terms by clicking on the box next to it.

The term itself is a link; click on this link to see more information about the term (also known as the Scope note or Full display). The definition of the term and its MeSH tree will be given here, as well as any assigned subheadings. You may choose here to restrict your term to major topic only (also known as “focusing”). You may also choose to turn off the automatic explode feature.

When you have selected your terms, go to Send To, using the pull-down arrow to choose how to send your search to Pubmed. Your selected terms will be inserted into a search box. When you are ready to run the search, click “Search PubMed.”

Combine terms using the Boolean operators AND OR NOT. Terms can be entered directly into the search box (as in: Depression AND fluoxetine). Terms may also be searched individually and then combined from the **History** page (this is recommended). Click on “History” at the top of the page to see previous search terms. Each search term has been labeled with a # and number. To combine search terms, type the number of each term (include the # sign) and connect with other terms with a Boolean operator. For example: #4 AND #5.

Use parentheses (also called “nesting”) to group and combine multiple search terms in a logical way. For example: Fluoxetine AND (depression OR anxiety); or if combining terms from the History using search numbers: #2 AND (#5 OR #6).

Limit Search results by selecting the Limits tab at the top of the page. A variety of limit options are available, including: author, journal, publication date, language, human or animal studies, age group, and publication type. You can also limit to fulltext or free fulltext. Multiple limits may be set in multiple categories. Select desired limits and run search. A check box will appear by the Limits link indicating limits have been set.

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NOTE: The limits will remain selected until you UNCHECK the limits box to turn them off. Sometimes you have to do this twice.

NOTE: Pubmed defaults to searching ALL YEARS unless you limit by publication date.

Displaying citations The default display for results is the Summary. Use the pull-down menu to choose other display formats. Select desired display format. Clicking on the author names link will also show the abstract display, as will selecting the yellow page icon left of the citation. Other display options include showing more than 20 citations per page, and sorting by author, journal or publication date. Mouseover the journal abbreviation to see the full journal name. NOTE: to see whether the article is available fulltext, go to the Abstract, AbstractPlus, or Citation Display.

The Citation Display will also show which MeSH terms have assigned to an article. The MeSH Terms are links; selecting the link will give you the option of searching Pubmed with that term, adding that term to your current search, or going directly to the MeSH database.

Results may be printed, emailed, saved, or stored in the Clipboard. Check the box next to the citation to select it. To select all citations, DO NOT chose any boxes. Use the pull-down menu next to the Send To button to select format--text, file, printer, email, or clipboard. The "Clipboard" (next to the History tab) is a temporary holding place for search results. Up to 500 citations may be saved there for up to 8 hours. Select the items you are interested in, select Clipboard from the Send To pull-down menu, and the selected items will be saved to the Clipboard. To see items, simply click on the "Clipboard" tab. To remove items: go the Clipboard and select Remove Clips from the pull-down menu.

Special PubMed features

Clinical Queries: To specify topic: therapy, diagnosis, etiology, or prognosis. User also expresses a preference for the search to be "specific" (to-the-point) or "sensitive" (less precise, more comprehensive). A hedge for systematic reviews is also available.

Single Citation Matcher: when you have a partial citation and want to find the complete citation.

PubMed Safety Tips

Cookies must be set to use Pubmed fully. Items will not store, or even show up in the History, unless cookies are activated. The search history and clipboard items are workstation specific. They will remain in Pubmed for up to 8 hours unless cleared. To do this in Internet Explorer: go to Tools, then Internet Options. Click on the General tab and then under Internet Temporary Files. Click on Delete Cookies.

Do not enclose phrases within quotes (ie. "drug information"). Pubmed does not allow true phrase searching and you may or may not get desired results.

Items CAN disappear from the History or Clipboard.

Be careful emailing search results. If you send results in HTML, view them in HTML when you receive them. Pubmed defaults to sending 1-20 items. If you are emailing more than 20 make sure you increase the "send" number accordingly otherwise you will receive only 20 citations.

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Page cannot be displayed error message may mean that your browser cache is full; you should empty your cache.

PubMed is subject to sudden unannounced changes that may make some instructions obsolete.