The Cochrane Library is a collection of high-quality, independent evidence to inform healthcare decision-making. It is owned by Cochrane (www.cochrane.org) and is freely available in England.

The Cochrane Library consists of three different databases, which are searched simultaneously:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR)</th>
<th>Full text of Cochrane Collaboration reviews, protocols of reviews currently in progress, editorials and supplements. New and updated reviews and protocols are continuously published when ready.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL)</td>
<td>The most comprehensive database of controlled trial records. Published monthly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cochrane Clinical Answers</td>
<td>Evidence-based answers to clinical questions, including data for the outcomes of the Cochrane Review deemed most relevant to practicing healthcare professionals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cochrane systematic reviews can be browsed by topic area or by special collection. Special Collections are curated collections on a specific healthcare topic.

Search Options:

(i) Type keywords into the search box
(ii) Select advanced search options (MeSH searching, search manager, limits, etc.)
(iii) Browse by topic
(iv) Browse Special Collections
Search Box

As the Cochrane Library is a specialised research database and therefore much smaller than databases such as Medline, you should keep your searches simple. For example, if you were looking for information on the use of antibiotics to treat sore throat in infants, the concepts would be antibiotics, sore throat.

- Enter your search terms in the search box and click on to search across all the databases listed at the start of this guide.

Advanced Search

Your search will usually be more comprehensive if you use MeSH terms (Medical Subject Headings) to conduct your search. If you use a MeSH term, for example Pharyngitis, the Cochrane Library will also search for different terms that might be used to describe pharyngitis, for example sore throat or pharyngitides. It will search for singular and plural forms of words, words with variant endings, alternative spellings, synonyms, etc.

To use MeSH terms:
- Click on Advanced Search from the Cochrane Library home page.
- Click on the Medical Terms (MeSH) tab.
- Enter your search term.
- Click on Lookup.

MeSH Tab

Tips: If you type two words next to each other, they will be searched using the and connector. Eg sore throat will retrieve records which contain the word sore and the word throat.

If you wish to search for words as a phrase you need to enclose them in speech marks. Eg. “sore throat”

You can truncate terms using an asterisk * Eg antibiotic* will search for antibiotic, antibiotics, etc.
To build up a search using the Search Manager:

You can build up a search step-by-step by clicking on the **Search Manager** tab. To conduct a thorough search, you may wish to combine MeSH searches and keyword searches for each of your concepts. You can combine searches by typing the search names (e.g. #1 and #2) into a search box.

**Tip:** You can combine keywords using **AND**, **OR** and **NOT**

**AND** will retrieve results that contain all the keywords

**OR** broadens your search and will retrieve results that contain any of the keywords

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**Advanced Search**

Please note that the Advanced Search is optimised for English search terms. Certain features, such as search operators and MeSH terms, are only available in English.

Click on + to add a new search box

Click on MeSH to search for a MeSH (Medical Subject Heading) term

Click on a number to view the results
Results:

Results are grouped by database. The Cochrane Reviews are displayed first by default. Select any of the other tabs to view a different category of results.

You can use the filters to the left of the results screen to refine your results. For example, results can be filtered by Date, Language, Topics (e.g. Child Health), Type of Study (e.g. intervention / diagnostic).

Save a search strategy

1. Click on Sign In to register and create an account

2. Click on Save this search to and type a name for your search

3. Click on View saved searches and Load your saved search

For further information, or help using the Cochrane Library, please contact the GOS ICH Library.

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Telephone: 020 7905 2847 (Internal ext. 42847)