



# Cochrane Library

The [Cochrane Library](https://www.cochranelibrary.com/) is a collection of high-quality, independent evidence to inform healthcare decision-making. It is owned by [Cochrane](https://www.cochrane.org/) and is freely available in the UK at <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/>.

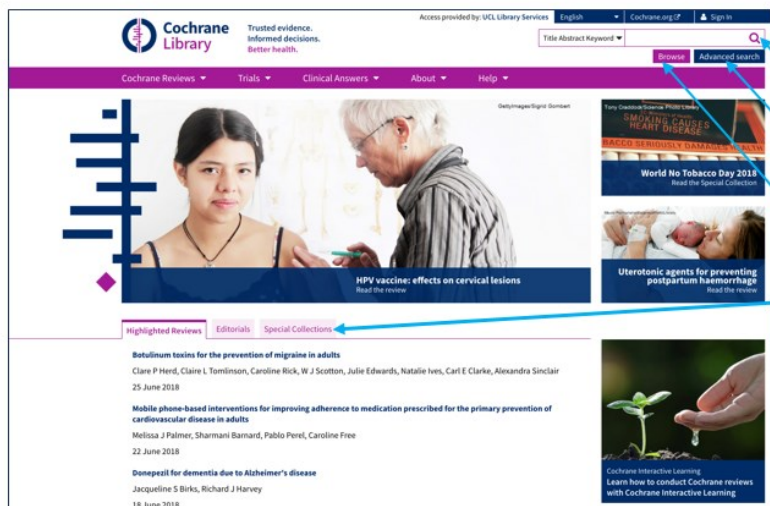
The Cochrane Library consists of three different databases, which are searched simultaneously. Results from the Epistemonikos health evidence database are also retrieved as part of a Cochrane Library search.

Database name	Description
1. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (CDSR).	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.
2. Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL).	The most comprehensive database of controlled trial records. Published monthly.
3. Cochrane Clinical Answers.	Evidence-based answers to clinical questions, including data for the outcomes of the Cochrane Review deemed most relevant to practising healthcare professionals.

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

1. Type Keywords into the search box.
2. Select advanced search options ( MeSH, searching, search manager, limits, etc.).
3. Browse by topic.
4. Browse Special Collections.



The screenshot shows the Cochrane Library homepage. At the top, there is a search bar with the text 'Type Abstract Keyword' and a search icon. Below the search bar, there are two buttons: 'Browse' and 'Advanced search'. The 'Browse' button is highlighted with a blue arrow pointing to it from the text '(i) Type keywords into the search box'. The 'Advanced search' button is highlighted with a blue arrow pointing to it from the text '(ii) Select advanced search options (MeSH searching, search manager, limits, etc.)'. Below the search bar, there is a navigation menu with 'Cochrane Reviews', 'Trials', 'Clinical Answers', 'About', and 'Help'. Below the navigation menu, there is a main content area with a large image of a woman and an older man. Below the image, there are three featured articles: 'HPV vaccine: effects on cervical lesions', 'World No Tobacco Day 2018', and 'Uterotonic agents for preventing postpartum haemorrhage'. Below the featured articles, there is a section for 'Highlighted Reviews' with three articles: 'Botulinum toxins for the prevention of migraine in adults', 'Mobile phone-based interventions for improving adherence to medication prescribed for the primary prevention of cardiovascular disease in adults', and 'Donepezil for dementia due to Alzheimer's disease'. Below the highlighted reviews, there is a section for 'Special Collections' with a blue arrow pointing to it from the text '(iii) Browse by topic'. Below the special collections, there is a section for 'Cochrane Interactive Learning' with a blue arrow pointing to it from the text '(iv) Browse Special Collections'.

**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.

**Tips:** If you type two words next to each other, they will be searched using the **and** connector.


E.g. **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.

E.g. **“sore throat”**.

You can truncate terms using an asterisk \*

E.g. **antibiotic\*** will search for **antibiotic**, **antibiotics**, etc.

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**

**Advanced Search**

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

Search Search manager Medical terms (MeSH)

Pharyngitis Select subheadings (optional) Link up Clear

**Definition**  
Pharyngitis Inflammation of the throat (PHARYNGE).

**Thesaurus Matches**

**Exact Term Match**

Pharyngitis  
Synonyms: Sore Throat(s), Throat, Sore, Sore Throat, Pharyngitides

**Phrase Matches**

Gagging  
Synonyms: Reflex, Pharyngeal, Pharyngeal Reflex

Adenoids  
Synonyms: Tonsils, Pharyngeal, Tonsil, Pharyngeal, Pharyngeal Tonsils, Pharyngeal Tonsil

Pharyngeal Diseases  
Synonyms: Disease, Pharyngeal, Diseases, Pharyngeal, Mouth-and-Throat Disease

**MeSH Trees**

MeSH term - **Pharyngitis**

Explode all trees  
 Single MeSH term (unexploded)  
 Explode selected trees

Tree number 1

- Stomatognathic Diseases (17)
- Pharyngeal Diseases (4)
- Larynx Syndrome
- Retropharyngeal Diseases (4)
- Pharyngeal Neoplasms (1)
- Pharyngitis (4)
- Acute Pharyngitis
- Retropharyngeal Abscess
- Tonsillitis (1)
- Waldeyer's Ring Inflammation

Tree number 2

**Search Results**

There are **1224** results for your search on

- MeSH descriptor: Pharyngitis
- Explode all trees

Add to search manager

Trials 1224

Cochrane Reviews 17

Save search View results

**Lookup**

Click on **Add to Search Manager** to build up a search history

Or, click to **View Results**

## 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.
- Click on the plus sign to add a new search box.
- Click on the MeSH drop-down menu to search for a MeSH.
- To view the results click on the blue box with the **number** of search results returned.

**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.

Search   Search manager   Medical terms (MeSH)

Save this search   View saved searches   Search help

Print

+	#1	MeSH descriptor: [Pharyngitis] explode all trees	MeSH	0
-	+	#2	pharyngitis or "sore throat" or pharyngitides	2071
-	+	#3	#1 or #2	2071
-	+	#4	MeSH descriptor: [Anti-Bacterial Agents] explode all trees	10718
-	+	#5	"anti-bacterial agents" or antibiotic	28811
-	+	#6	#4 or #5	29654
-	+	#7	#3 and #6	382

Clear all   Highlight orphan lines

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.

## Filters

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

- Click on Sign In
- Click on save this search
- Click on View saved searches and load your saved search

The screenshot shows the Cochrane Library website interface. At the top right, there is a 'Sign In' button circled in blue with the number 1. Below it, a blue arrow points to the 'Sign In' button. The main navigation bar is purple and contains links for 'Cochrane Reviews', 'Trials', 'Clinical Answers', 'About', and 'Help'. Below the navigation bar is the 'Advanced Search' section. A note states: '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.' Below the note are three tabs: 'Search', 'Search manager', and 'Medical terms (MeSH)'. In the 'Search manager' tab, there are three buttons: 'Save this search', 'View saved searches', and 'Search help'. The 'Save this search' button is circled in blue with the number 2, and a blue arrow points to it. Below it, the text '2. Click on Save this search to and type a name for your search' is written. The 'View saved searches' button is circled in blue with the number 3, and a blue arrow points to it. Below it, the text '3. Click on View saved searches and Load your saved search' is written.

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

## Further information

For more information, support or training on using Cochrane Library, please contact the [GOS-ICH Library](mailto:ich.library@ucl.ac.uk) at [ich.library@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ich.library@ucl.ac.uk).

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[www.ucl.ac.uk/child-health/support-services/library](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/child-health/support-services/library)