Cochrane Library

The Cochrane Library is a collection of high-quality, independent evidence to inform healthcare decision-making. It is owned by Cochrane and is freely available in the UK at https://www.cochranelibrary.com/.
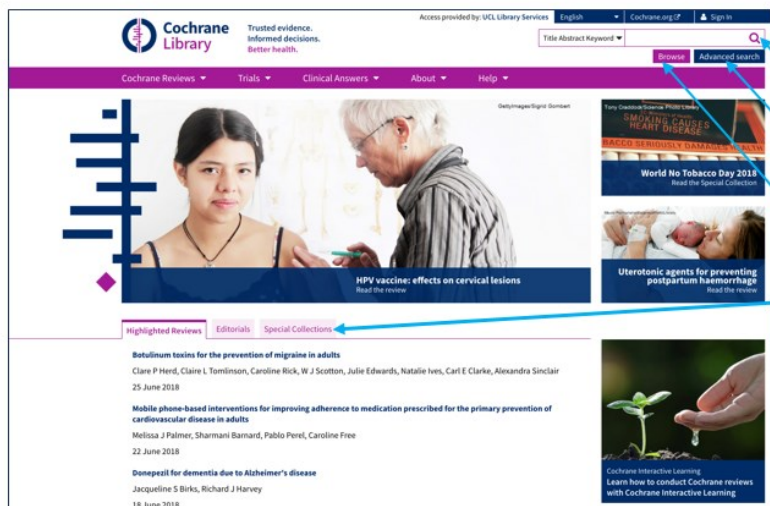
The Cochrane Library consists of three different databases, which are searched simultaneously. Results from the Epistemonikos health evidence database are also retrieved as part of a Cochrane Library search.

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.

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 $\mathcal{Q}$ 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**.

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.

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

Further information

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

Last update: January 2020

ich.library@ucl.ac.uk

www.ucl.ac.uk/child-health/support-services/library