

## Quick Reference Guide

### What is PubMed?

PubMed is a free version of the Medline database, a major biomedical database covering topics such as medicine, nursing, dentistry and psychiatry.

PubMed indexes articles in over 4,800 healthcare journals, and these will include systematic reviews and clinical trials, as well as editorials and letters.

### How can I access it?

Access PubMed at [www.pubmed.com](http://www.pubmed.com)

You can register to access personalisation features, but it is not necessary.

### Are there better alternatives?

You can also access Medline, along with other databases at <http://library.sath.nhs.uk/databases> using your NHS Athens account.

Using these databases, you'll be provided with links to the full text of articles that are available to NHS staff, in addition to those that are freely available.

If you are looking for evidence in the form of guidelines, systematic reviews or drug information, you may wish to use NHS Evidence ([www.evidence.nhs.uk](http://www.evidence.nhs.uk)) or the TRIP Database ([www.tripdatabase.com](http://www.tripdatabase.com)) instead.

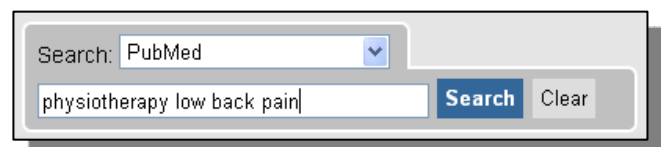
### How do I search?

You can use the main search box to carry out a simple search.

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For best results, use a few keywords from your search question.

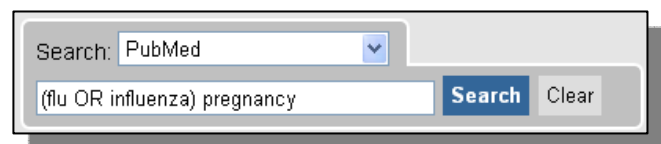
For example, if your question is 'Is physiotherapy effective in lower back pain?' your search query could be:



A screenshot of the PubMed search interface. The search box contains the text 'physiotherapy low back pain'. To the right of the search box are two buttons: 'Search' and 'Clear'. Above the search box is a dropdown menu with 'PubMed' selected.

Enter your keywords and click on 'Search' or press 'enter' to begin.


Note that PubMed searches for items that contain **all** the words you type (by treating searches as '**AND**' searches by default). If you want PubMed to search for synonyms, put brackets around and '**OR**' between each word for example:



A screenshot of the PubMed search interface. The search box contains the text '(flu OR influenza) pregnancy'. To the right of the search box are two buttons: 'Search' and 'Clear'. Above the search box is a dropdown menu with 'PubMed' selected.

### How are the results displayed?

Results are shown in reverse date order (latest items first), and 20 items are shown on each page.



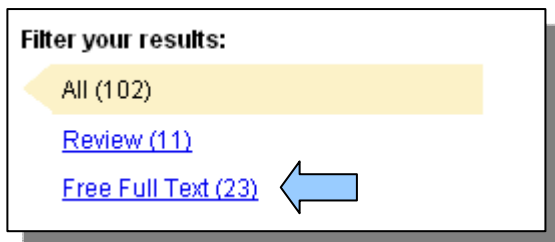
A screenshot of the PubMed search results page. The title is 'Results: 1 to 20 of 2568'. Below the title are navigation links: '<< First', '< Prev', 'Page 1', 'Next >', and 'Last >>'. The first two results are listed:

- [Physiotherapy-led triage clinic for low back pain.](#)  
1. Blackburn MS, Cowan SM, Cary B, Nall C.  
Aust Health Rev. 2009 Nov;33(4):663-70.  
PMID: 20166916 [PubMed - in process]  
[Related articles](#)
- [Decrease in Postural Sway and Trunk Stiffness During Cognitive Dual-Task in Nonspecific Chronic Low Back Pain Patients, Performance Compared to Healthy Control Subjects.](#)  
2. Van Daele U, Hagman F, Truijten S, Vorlat P, Van Gheluwe B, Vaes P.

Clicking on a title will show an abstract, if one is available.

### How can I view the full text of an item?

On the right of the results screen will appear options for filtering by review articles or full-text items



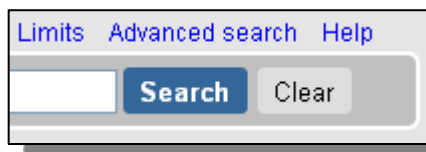
Click on the link to 'Free Full Text' to see only articles available in full.

You can also see in the list of results any that are free, by looking for the 'Free article' link below the item.



If the item has no link to the full-text, you may still be able to view the item online if the NHS subscribes to it. Visit the NHS Journals site at <http://library.sath.nhs.uk/journals>. If you login to the NHS Journals site with your NHS Athens account, you'll be able to check whether the journal title you want is available online, or held in your local health library.

### How can I filter results?



Once you have carried out a search, click on the 'Limits' link to choose from a range of filters including **type of article**, **language** (useful for limiting to English language only), **human only**, **age group**, and **date of publication**.

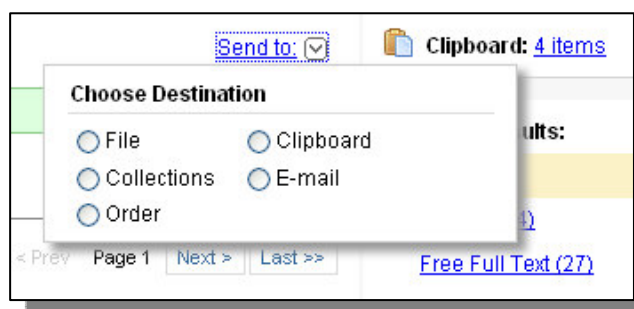
Tick or select your filters, and then click on 'Search' again to apply them.

### How can I do advanced searching?

Click on the link to 'Advanced search' above the search box. The advanced search option allows you to build searches using Boolean (And, Or, Not), to use MeSH thesaurus terms, to specify the field(s) you wish to search, to view your search history, and more.

### How can I print or email results?

You can print by using the print facilities on your browser, but this will print all the items on the screen. An alternative is to use the check boxes next to each item you wish to select, and then use the 'Send to' menu to the right of the results, and selecting 'Clipboard'.



If you add items to the clipboard, you can see those items by clicking on the 'Clipboard' link that will appear to the right of the 'Send to' link. You can add up to 500 items to the clipboard, from different searches.

Alternatively, you can send your results to a text file, or email the results to yourself.

### What else can PubMed do?

If you have an incomplete reference, you can use the 'Single Citation Matcher' to find it. The link is under the Tools menu on the front page, and you just need to enter whatever details you have and PubMed will do the rest.