Medline

What is MEDLINE?

- An online database - the computerized version of three print indexes: Index Medicus, the Index to Dental Literature, and the International Nursing Index
- Comprehensive in coverage of biomedical literature
- International in coverage, describing articles from about 4,800 journals published around the world in 30 languages. Around 86% of the articles described are written in English
- Produced by the U.S. National Library of Medicine

I. SEARCHING OVID MEDLINE

The example below illustrates a step-by-step search of the topic chocolate for the prevention of cardiovascular disease:

The two main concepts in this question are: Chocolate; Cardiovascular Disease

Search Screen

1. Search Box
   Type one of the major concepts from the topic into the search box (e.g. “cardiovascular disease”).

   **Note:** The second concept will be searched in Step 12.

2. Map Term to Subject Heading
   Leave this box Checked! Medline will match the concept to an appropriate Medical Subject Heading (MeSH).

3. Click on Search to continue.
4. **Your Term Mapped to the Following Subject Heading...**

Medline has mapped “cardiovascular disease” to the Medical Subject Heading (i.e. MeSH term) **Cardiovascular Diseases**. This is the standard term for this concept in Medline. The advantage to searching using this term is that all articles in Medline on this topic are labeled with this term, no matter which term was used by the author.

(If no appropriate match is found, see Step 15, *Search as Keyword*).

5. **Scope Note**

Click on **Scope** to see details about this term.

**Scope Note Display Screen**

6. **Scope Note for:**

Check the MeSH term information to confirm that it describes the concept of interest.

7. **Previous Page**

To continue searching click on Previous Page.
8. Medical Subject Headings are arranged in a hierarchy (tree). Click on the term **Cardiovascular Diseases**.

9. Tree

**Cardiovascular Diseases** is broken down into several different types of diseases: **Cardiovascular Abnormalities**; **Cardiovascular Infections**; **Heart Diseases**; **Pregnancy Complications, Cardiovascular**; and **Vascular Diseases**.

To search all of these more specific types of cardiovascular diseases, as well as cardiovascular diseases in general, you can choose to **Explode** **Cardiovascular Diseases**.

“Exploding” the term you are interested in is a good idea unless you do not want to search any of the terms indented below your term in the tree. Also, sometimes the “Explode” function has no effect because there are no terms indented below your term in the tree.

By exploding “Cardiovascular Diseases” you will search all these terms as well.
10. Subheading Display

You can include all subheadings or focus just on a particular aspect of Cardiovascular Diseases. If you do want to choose one or more subheadings, select their check boxes.

In this case you are looking for prevention of cardiovascular diseases, so choosing Prevention & Control makes sense.

11. Continue

Click on Continue for the next screen.

Your first search for Cardiovascular Diseases appears as Search 1 in the Search History.
The first 10 results are displayed at the bottom of the screen.

12. Search Second Concept
Repeat Steps 1-10 to search the second concept “chocolate”.
13. Combine Searches

Combine the two searches in Search History as shown in the search box.

Because you want to find articles on both of these concepts, use **AND** to combine them.

If you wanted to find articles on either of these topics, you would use **OR**.

14. Results

The results of your combined search are displayed at the bottom of the screen.

Click **Abstract Reference** or **Complete Reference** to get more information about articles of interest.

Click **Find It!** to see if this article is available in print or electronic format from the University Library. Use the Interlibrary Loan option from the Find It! screen to request items to which the University Library does not subscribe.
**Search as Keyword**

Sometimes Medline may not be able to map your search term to an appropriate MeSH term. For example, you might want to know whether white chocolate promotes cardiovascular health. When you search “white chocolate”, you see the following list of MeSH terms on the **Mapping Display Screen**:

![Mapping Display Screen](image)

In this case, you want to search the term exactly as you have entered it. We are interested specifically in white chocolate, not the other types of cacao products, so it doesn’t make sense to choose “Cacao”.

By selecting **Search as Keyword** and clicking **Continue**, you will be searching article titles and abstracts for the exact phrase “white chocolate”.

If there is an appropriate MeSH term, searching it rather than the keyword is preferable for two reasons:

1. You do not have to worry about all possible ways to express a concept (e.g. cardiovascular disease, cardiovascular diseases, heart disease, etc.) because all articles on this concept should be labeled with the same MeSH term.

2. If you do a keyword search, the word or phrase may occur in the abstract of the record, but it may be mentioned just in passing. When you do a MeSH search, you are searching just the part of the record that contains MeSH terms. An expert indexer at the National Library of Medicine has read the article and has labeled it with appropriate MeSH terms – so the article should really be about the concept described by that MeSH term.
II. SAVING SEARCHES

As you develop search strategies, you may want to save them for later use or further development. Medline (as well as other OvidSP databases) allows you to store search sets created during any session, and to return to your search at a later time without you having to retype each search set manually.

1. Saving a Search Strategy

Save your Search Set (Strategy) by clicking the Save Search History button in the Search History window.

2(a). Medline will prompt you to Log in with a Personal Account Name and Password... or to...

2(b). Create a New Personal Account

If you do not already have an OvidSP account, it will be necessary to create a new Personal Account.
### Saving the Current Search History

**3. Saving the Current Search History**

Key in the **Search Name** you wish to use, and a **Comment**, if desired.

**4. Click on the Type drop-down menu to select the type of search you would like this to be.**

**5. Click on Save.**

### "Types" of Searches

- **Temporary**
  - Saves a search strategy for a period of twenty-four hours, and then deletes it.

- **Permanent**
  - Saves a search strategy for as long as the U of S Library maintains a valid subscription to Medline. Use this option to save and re-run the search at another time or for basic strategies from which you can develop further searches.

- **AutoAlert**
  - Creates a search strategy that runs automatically on a regular basis and emails results to designated recipients.
You may view and re-run your saved search strategies by logging into your OvidSP account:

1. **Log into Your Personal Account by clicking on My Account.**

2. **Click on My Workspace.**
3. Click on My Searches & Alerts.

4. Select the search you wish to re-run.

5. Click on Run.

6. You will be informed of the action taken and where to find your completed search (Click on Search to view your results).
IV. MY PROJECTS

My Projects is a management system that allows you to organize your research. You can store many different types of items in a project, including (but not limited to):

- Search Results
- Search Strategies (to re-use at a future time)
- PDF Journal Articles
- HTML Full Text Journal Articles

For a full description of available features please refer to OvidSP Online Help.

 Saving Search Results in My Projects

1. Conduct your Medline search and then log into your personal account by clicking on My Account.
2. Return to your Search Results by clicking on Search.
3. Select the citations you would like to save, then
4. Click on Add to My Projects.

5. If this is a New Project, you will be required to Name it. Then click on Add Item(s).
For further assistance with Medline, please phone 306-966-6024 or drop into the Leslie and Irene Dubé Health Sciences Library.

6. Click on Go to My Projects.

7. Your current project file will appear in the navigation panel with your saved results displayed to the right.