

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
National Institutes of Health



How To Find Information About Complementary and Integrative Health Practices on PubMed®

Want to know what the science says about a complementary and integrative health topic?

Try looking it up in [PubMed®](#), a U.S. government database that includes citations for more than 32 million scientific papers.

A new, updated version of PubMed went online in 2020, so you can use it on a computer, tablet, or phone.

This guide shows you several common types of searches you might want to try. Follow along with us as we search for publications on:

- A complementary health approach (the herb echinacea)
- Complementary health approaches for a condition (depression)
- Studies funded by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) on a specific topic (tai chi)

We'll also show you how to:

- Get the full text of an article if it's available
- Have your search results sent to you
- Narrow your search
- Find out about advanced search features

If you need more detailed information, go to the [PubMed User Guide](#).

Searching for Publications About a Complementary Health Approach

Let's search for publications about the herb echinacea.

1. Go to PubMed at pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov. A search box will appear.
2. Type **echinacea** into the search box.



3. Hit the "Search" button. You'll get a list of results like these:

1,336 results

Echinacea for preventing and treating the common cold.
1 Karsch-Völk M, Barrett B, Kiefer D, Bauer R, Ardjomand-Woelkart K, Linde K.
Cite Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2014 Feb 20;2(2):CD000530. doi: 10.1002/14651858.CD000530.pub3.
Share PMID: 24554461 **Free PMC article.** Review.
BACKGROUND: **Echinacea** plant preparations (family Asteraceae) are widely used in Europe and North America for common colds. ...MAIN RESULTS: Twenty-four double-blind trials with 4631 participants including a total of 33 comparisons of **Echinacea** preparations and place ...

Echinacea plants as antioxidant and antibacterial agents: From traditional medicine to biotechnological applications.
2 Sharifi-Rad M, Mnayer D, Morais-Braga MFB, Carneiro JNP, Bezerra CF, Coutinho HDM, Salehi B, Martorell M, Del Mar Contreras M, Soltani-Nejad A, Uribe YAH, Yousaf Z, Iriti M, Sharifi-Rad J.
Share Phytother Res. 2018 Sep;32(9):1653-1663. doi: 10.1002/ptr.6101. Epub 2018 May 10.
PMID: 29749084 Review.
The genus **Echinacea** consists of 11 taxa of herbaceous and perennial flowering plants. ...Moreover, the factors affecting the chemical composition of **Echinacea** spp. are also covered....

Immune system effects of echinacea, ginseng, and astragalus: a review.
3 Block KI, Mead MN.
Cite Integr Cancer Ther. 2003 Sep;2(3):247-67. doi: 10.1177/1534735403256419.
PMID: 15035888 **Free article.** Review.
Share This review article examines 3 popular herbal immune stimulants that are often of interest to cancer patients. **Echinacea**, a native of North America, is widely used to prevent, or provide early treatment for, colds. Preclinical studies lend biological plausibility to the id ...

You can now go through the list of citations to find the ones that interest you.

To read the abstract of a paper listed on your search results page, click on its title. Here's what the beginning of an abstract in PubMed looks like.

Review > [Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2014 Feb 20;2\(2\):CD000530.](#)

doi: 10.1002/14651858.CD000530.pub3.

Echinacea for preventing and treating the common cold

Marlies Karsch-Völk¹, Bruce Barrett, David Kiefer, Rudolf Bauer, Karin Ardjomand-Woelkart, Klaus Linde

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 24554461 PMCID: [PMC4068831](#) DOI: [10.1002/14651858.CD000530.pub3](#)

[Free PMC article](#)

Abstract

Background: Echinacea plant preparations (family Asteraceae) are widely used in Europe and North America for common colds. Most consumers and physicians are not aware that products available under the term Echinacea differ appreciably in their composition, mainly due to the use of variable plant material, extraction methods and the addition of other components.

Objectives: To assess whether there is evidence that Echinacea preparations are effective and safe compared to placebo in the prevention and treatment of the common cold.

Search methods: We searched CENTRAL 2013, Issue 5, MEDLINE (1946 to May week 5, 2013), EMBASE (1991 to June 2013), CINAHL (1981 to June 2013), AMED (1985 to February 2012), LILACS (1981 to June 2013), Web of Science (1955 to June 2013), CAMBASE (no time limits), the Centre for Complementary Medicine Research (1988 to September 2007), WHO ICTRP and

Searching for Publications on Complementary Approaches for a Health Condition

Perhaps you're interested in finding out what complementary approaches are used for a specific health condition—let's use depression as an example. A good term to use for this type of search is “complementary therapies.”

1. Go to PubMed at pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.
2. Type **complementary therapies** and **depression** into the search box.



3. Hit the “Search” button.

You'll get results like these.

complementary therapies depression

Advanced Create alert Create RSS User Guide

Save Email Send to Sorted by: Best match Display options

8,900 results

Complementary therapies for clinical depression: an overview of systematic reviews.
1
Cite Haller H, Anheyer D, Cramer H, Dobos G.
BMJ Open. 2019 Aug 5;9(8):e028527. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2018-028527.
Share PMID: 31383703 **Free PMC article.** Review.
OBJECTIVES: As clinical practice guidelines vary widely in their search strategies and recommendations of **complementary** and alternative medicine (CAM) for **depression**, this overview aimed at systematically summarising the level 1 evidence on CAM for patients with a c ...

Complementary and alternative medicine therapies for perinatal depression.
2
Cite Deligiannidis KM, Freeman MP.
Best Pract Res Clin Obstet Gynaecol. 2014 Jan;28(1):85-95. doi: 10.1016/j.bpobgyn.2013.08.007.
Epub 2013 Aug 26.
Share PMID: 24041861 **Free PMC article.** Review.
In this chapter, we review the evidence for several commonly used CAM **therapies** (i.e. omega-3 fatty acids, folate, S-adenosyl-methionine, St John's Wort, bright light therapy, exercise, massage, and acupuncture) in the treatment of perinatal **depression** ...

Complementary Therapies for Mental Health Disorders.
3
Cite Asher GN, Gerkin J, Gaynes BN.
Med Clin North Am. 2017 Sep;101(5):847-864. doi: 10.1016/j.mcna.2017.04.004. Epub 2017 Jun 20.
Share PMID: 28802467 Review.
Skepticism toward such treatments has fueled interest in and use of **complementary therapies**, such as acupuncture, meditation, and natural products. ...This article presents current evidence-based recommendations for **complementary therapies** in the treat ...

Searching for NCCIH-Funded Studies

Perhaps you're interested in seeing what research NCCIH has funded on a specific topic—let's use tai chi as an example. There's a special way to do this that takes advantage of one of PubMed's Advanced Search features.

1. Go to PubMed at pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.
2. Type **NCCIH [gr]** into the search box, followed by **tai chi**. The "[gr]" is a search field tag that searches specifically for a grant number.



3. Hit the "Search" button.

Here are the results:

NCCIH [gr] tai chi

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Sorted by: Best match

182 results

Tai chi/yoga reduces prenatal depression, anxiety and sleep disturbances.
1 Field T, Diego M, Delgado J, Medina L.
Cite Complement Ther Clin Pract. 2013 Feb;19(1):6-10. doi: 10.1016/j.ctcp.2012.10.001. Epub 2012 Nov 24.
Share PMID: 23337557 **Free PMC article.** Clinical Trial.
Ninety-two prenatally depressed pregnant women were randomly assigned to a tai chi/yoga or a waitlist control group at an average of 22 weeks gestation. The tai chi/yoga group participated in a 20-min group session per week for 12 weeks. ...

Effect of tai chi versus aerobic exercise for fibromyalgia: comparative effectiveness randomized controlled trial.
2 Wang C, Schmid CH, Fielding RA, Harvey WF, Reid KF, Price LL, Driban JB, Kalish R, Roness R, McAllindon T.
Cite BMJ. 2018 Mar 21;360:k851. doi: 10.1136/bmj.k851.
Share PMID: 29563100 **Free PMC article.** Clinical Trial.
OBJECTIVES: To determine the effectiveness of tai chi interventions compared with aerobic exercise, a current core standard treatment in patients with fibromyalgia, and to test whether the effectiveness of tai chi depends on its dosage or duration.

Comparative Effectiveness of Tai Chi Versus Physical Therapy for Knee Osteoarthritis: A Randomized Trial.
3 Wang C, Schmid CH, Iversen MD, Harvey WF, Fielding RA, Driban JB, Price LL, Wong JB, Reid KF, Roness R, McAllindon T.
Cite Ann Intern Med. 2016 Jul 19;165(2):77-86. doi: 10.7326/M15-2143. Epub 2016 May 17.
Share PMID: 27183035 **Free PMC article.** Clinical Trial.
BACKGROUND: Few remedies effectively treat long-term pain and disability from knee

Getting Full-Text Articles

The full text of some papers listed in PubMed is available for free from PubMed Central® (PMC).

If full text is available through PMC, you'll see this icon on the right-hand side of the abstract page, next to the paper's title.



Just click on the icon and you can read the full paper. In most instances, you can also download it as a PDF file or in other formats.

How To Have Your Search Results Sent to You

You may want to have the results of a PubMed search sent to you so you can review them later.

1. After you've completed your search, click on "Email" below the search box.

2. You'll see this popup. You can use it to have the search results sent to you by email.

Narrowing Your Search

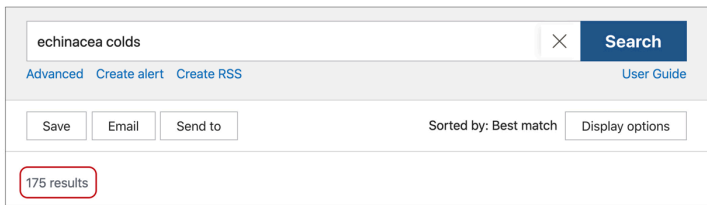
PubMed searches often produce large numbers of results. There are several ways to narrow down a search to make it easier to find the information you're looking for. In this section, we'll talk about:

- Adding more search terms
- Changing the display options
- Using filters

Adding More Search Terms

If you narrow your topic, you can focus your search to get more useful results.

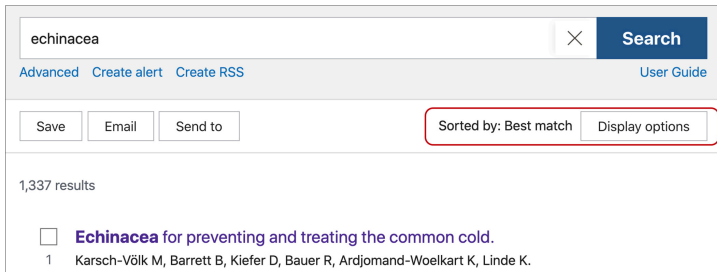
For example, our search for “echinacea” produced 1,325 results. But perhaps you're only interested in echinacea as a treatment for colds. If you add “colds” as a second search term, you'll get a more manageable 175 results.



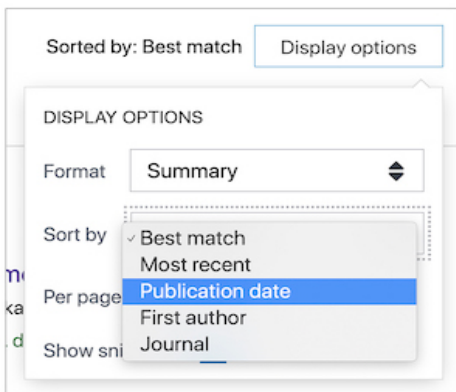
Changing the Display Options

Sometimes when you search PubMed, you want to see the most recent research on a topic. PubMed can arrange your search results in this way.

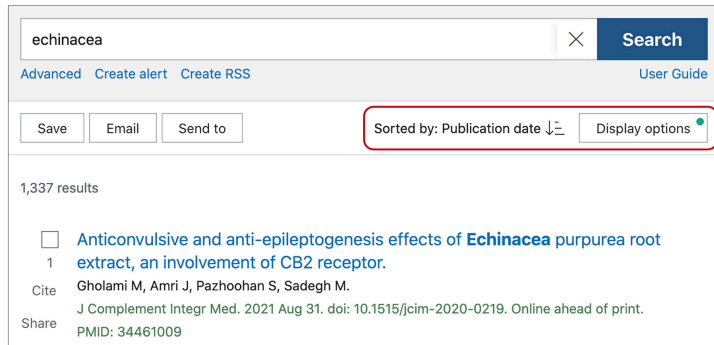
Find the “Display options” box in the top right-hand corner of the page. You’ll see that the display options are automatically set to “Best match.”



To see the most recent papers instead, click on “Display options.” A drop-down menu will appear. Click on the menu for “Sort by” and choose “Publication date.”



Your citations will now appear with the most recently published papers at the top of the list.



echinacea

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Sorted by: Publication date ↓

1,337 results

1 [Anticonvulsive and anti-epileptogenesis effects of *Echinacea* purpurea root extract, an involvement of CB2 receptor.](#)

Cite Gholami M, Amri J, Pazhoohan S, Sadegh M.
J Complement Integr Med. 2021 Aug 31. doi: 10.1515/jcim-2020-0219. Online ahead of print.

Share PMID: 34461009

Using Filters

To the left of your list of search results, you'll see a group of options called "Filters." You can use filters to limit the results of your search.

For example, you could limit your results to papers published in the past 5 years, those that have free full text available, or those that report on randomized controlled trials. You can also use more than one filter at the same time.

TEXT AVAILABILITY

Abstract

Free full text

Full text

ARTICLE ATTRIBUTE

Associated data

ARTICLE TYPE

Books and Documents

Clinical Trial

Meta-Analysis

Randomized Controlled Trial

Review

Systematic Review

PUBLICATION DATE

1 year

5 years

10 years

Custom Range

Additional filters

Reset all filters

Using Advanced Search

PubMed uses multiple tools to help you find relevant results. In most instances, you can find what you need by typing just one or two search terms into PubMed; it's not necessary to use special tags or syntax. However, these tools are available. See the [Advanced Search](#) section of the [PubMed User Guide](#) for more information.

On the PubMed User Guide page, Advanced Search is one of the options in the menu on the right-hand side. The Advanced Search section of the guide explains how you can search by a specific field, browse the index of search terms, see your PubMed search history, view search details, and more.

Need More Help?

This guide has only scratched the surface of what you can do with PubMed. For information on other topics, such as searching by author or journal, expanding a search, or finding a specific citation, go to the [PubMed User Guide](#).

You can also call or email the [NCCIH Clearinghouse](#) to help you find information in PubMed on the specific complementary health topic you're researching.

NCCIH Clearinghouse

The NCCIH Clearinghouse provides information on NCCIH and complementary and integrative health approaches, including publications and searches of Federal databases of scientific and medical literature. The Clearinghouse does not provide medical advice, treatment recommendations, or referrals to practitioners.

Toll-free in the U.S.: 1-888-644-6226

tty (for deaf and hard-of-hearing callers):

1-866-464-3615

Website: <https://nccih.nih.gov/>

Email: info@nccih.nih.gov

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