What is MeSH?
MeSH terms are official words or phrases selected to represent medical concepts. Each article in PubMed is assigned one or more MeSH indexing terms which describe what the article is about. Think of them as tags, which make it easier for you to locate all of the articles on a specific subject.

Finding MeSH on your topic
1. From the PubMed homepage, open the MeSH database:

2. Examine each of the major concepts in your topic (in red below).

   "Do dietary factors play a role in the onset of migraine in adolescence?"

3. Try to identify a MeSH which relates to each of those concepts.

4. In this example, one concept is migraine, so begin by typing the word migraine into the MeSH browser. Fifteen MeSH contain the word migraine, but the main, broad heading on the topic of migraine appears to be Migraine Disorders. Click on it for more detail.
5. Read the definition of the **Migraine Disorders** MeSH to find out what it includes.

6. Look at the **Year introduced**. How long has the heading been in use? If a MeSH was only introduced in 2018, try to find extra MeSH to pick up papers from previous years. The MeSH **Migraine Disorders** was introduced in 2006, but papers going back as far as 1963 have been tagged with this heading.

7. Look at the **Entry Terms**. These words and phrases are not official MeSH terms, however entry terms can be a useful source of synonyms for your topic.

8. Look at the hierarchy of MeSH headings, and notice where Migraine Disorders sits in that list:

```
All MeSH Categories
  Diseases Category
    Nervous System Diseases
      Central Nervous System Diseases
        Brain Diseases
          Headache Disorders
            Headache Disorders, Primary
              Migraine Disorders
                Alice in Wonderland Syndrome
                Migraine with Aura
                Migraine without Aura
                Ophthalmologic Migraines
```

Think of MeSH as a tree with 18 branches. The categories go from very broad to very narrow. **Migraine Disorders** is narrower than **Headache Disorders, Primary**, but broader than **Migraine with Aura**.

If you can't find a MeSH for your concept, try using less words. For example: instead of searching for *elderly people*, try just *elderly*. Official MeSH terminology can be different to natural language. For example:

- natural language = heart attack
- MeSH = myocardial infarction

### Search PubMed using MeSH

1. If you are still on the MeSH page, go to PubMed by selecting PubMed from the drop down options:

```
MeSH
  Migraine Disorders
```

2. To find all of the papers in PubMed about migraines, type the MeSH exactly as it appears in the MeSH browser, followed by the code [mh]. Search results below show that 25480 papers in PubMed have been tagged with the MeSH **Migraine Disorders**. **Tip:** For best results, use quotation marks around MeSH terms, even single words (*here's why*). However truncation (asterisk) can't be used with MeSH.
1. Note that a search using the MeSH Migraine Disorders in PubMed will automatically search for all of the narrower MeSH which are indented beneath it. This is called exploding. If you don't want to include all of the indented MeSH, you can exclude them.

![MeSH Migraine Disorders]

2. For example: To search for both the broad heading Migraine Disorders and the narrower heading Ophthalmoplegic Migraine, simply use the code [mh:noexp]. This will eliminate the other three indented MeSH from the search.

![Search results]

See Also:
A short video on using MeSH: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K98AO3w4JA4&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K98AO3w4JA4&feature=youtu.be)


Yale MeSH analyser tool: [http://mesh.med.yale.edu/](http://mesh.med.yale.edu/)

Contact Us
For further support or questions, please email the Liaison Librarians for Health & Medical Sciences Vikki Langton and Robert Franchini at: fhms_librarians@adelaide.edu.au