1. Analyse your question
   - Identify the MAIN CONCEPTS in your topic.

2. Select database search terms
   - Select your database search terms using either Subject Headings and/or Keywords.

   **SUBJECT HEADING** will search for a topic discussed in an article, using the Medical Subject Heading (MeSH) Thesaurus.

   Medline’s MAPPING will assist you in selecting the appropriate subject headings.

   Once selected you will retrieve any article where this subject heading has been used to index/describe an article.

   Example: **congestive heart failure**

   **KEYWORD** will search the databases title and abstract fields for your exact phrase.

   Example: **congestive heart failure**

   Truncation and adjacency can be used to broaden keyword searches.

   Shortcut: Enter **heart adj3 fail*.mp.** in the search box on the main screen.

   This will locate heart within 3 words of fail*.
   And fail* will find failing or failure or failures.

3. Put all the pieces together logically
   Once you have selected your search terms which may be a combination of subject headings and keywords, design a search strategy by combining your search concepts with **AND, OR, and NOT**.

   **AND**
   Both concepts/terms will be present in items retrieved by the search.

   **OR**
   Means either one concept/term or the other will be present within the search results.

   **NOT**
   Used to remove a concept / term / search set.

   **AND** is most useful when performing a number of searches on the same or similar topics. Use **NOT** to exclude duplicate results.
4. From query to search

Query: Vitamin D3 for patients with End Stage Renal Failure and Vitamin D deficiency.

Main concepts?

Patients: Chronic Kidney Failure + Vitamin D Deficiency
Intervention: Vitamin D3
Comparator: Placebo
Outcomes: Increased bone mineralization/density, improved immune and cardiac function, & survival.
Methodology: Randomized controlled trials OR Meta analysis of RCTs

Database search

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P</th>
<th>Searches</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kidney Failure, Chronic/</td>
<td>68359</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>exp Renal Dialysis/</td>
<td>81124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>116681</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>exp Vitamin D Deficiency/</td>
<td>14164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3 and 4</td>
<td>2375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>exp vitamin d or exp cholecalciferol/</td>
<td>35331</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5 and 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>limit 7 to (meta analysis or randomized controlled trial)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3 and 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>limit 9 to (meta analysis or randomized controlled trial)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: If you are not finding what you want you may need to reconsider your logic and try searching again.
There is always more than one way of searching a topic.

ie. In this search we found 27 RCTs that included chronic kidney failure + vitamin D deficiency + treatment vitamin D (set 8) but when we removed vitamin d deficiency which is implied by the treatment we found more than 100 extra RCTs

5. Saving your Search

- First Register for a Personal Account via My Account
- Enter your search terms and Save Search History
- Choose to save the search Permanently or as an Auto Alert (emailed results update). Name and date the search for future reference.
- To Rerun a saved search, open the database, enter your Personal Account Name and Password and Login. Mark the appropriate saved search and RUN.
- Use the Search tab to view the search and reload the page if the search is not displayed.