

# Search Strategy Template

## 1. Identify Key Concepts

- Break down your PICO into main concepts:
  1. Population (P)
  2. Intervention (I)
  3. Comparator (C) — optional
  4. Outcome (O) — optional

## 2. List Keywords and Synonyms

- For each concept, list keywords, synonyms, acronyms, and relevant subject headings (e.g., MeSH in PubMed).

## 3. Use Boolean Operators

- Use **OR** to combine synonyms within each concept.
- Use **AND** to combine different concepts.
- Use **NOT** carefully to exclude irrelevant terms.

## 4. Apply Truncation and Wildcards

- Use truncation symbols (e.g., \* or \$) to capture word variants.
- Use wildcards for spelling variations.

## 5. Adapt to Specific Databases

- Modify syntax for each database (e.g., PubMed, Embase, Cochrane).
- Use controlled vocabulary terms where available (e.g., MeSH, Emtree).

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# Example Search Strategy for PubMed

**Research question:** \_“Effectiveness of aspirin for preventing stroke in diabetic patients”\_

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Last update: **2025/07/01 17:00**

