

MeSH Changes and PubMed Searching: Class Handout

Check your learning by filling in the blanks, below.

Introduction:

MeSH changes for the next year are generally posted in the month of _____r on the NLM MeSH web site.

Documentation and guidance on MeSH changes in MEDLINE can be found in the NLM T _____ B _____ in November and December.

Review Basics:

Check your saved PubMed searches for MeSH term m _____ and automatic e _____.

Two Dates in MeSH:

When two dates are listed for “Year Introduced,” you can use the MeSH term to search the concept back to the oldest/newest [circle one] date listed.

Types of Changes to MeSH:

1. New Term; Same Meaning

When MeSH renames a concept (e.g., Sedentary Lifestyle):

- The existing indexed records are changed so that the old term is replaced with the new one.
- The old term is added as an Entry Term.

To adjust your searches:

- Usually you need to do _____.

2. New Term Clarifies Meaning

When MeSH adds a term (e.g., Progression-Free Survival) to clarify the meaning of an existing term:

- Existing indexed records are usually not changed.
- The “old” term may have a scope change.

To adjust your searches:

- Decide which terms are best for your concepts.
- Check P _____ I _____ for searching older literature.

3. New Term is More Specific

When MeSH adds a term to gain specificity (e.g., Clinical Trial Protocol):

- Existing indexed records are generally NOT changed.
- The “old” term continues to be used.

To adjust your searches:

- Consider using the new, more specific term to retrieve newly indexed records.
- Consider the Previous Indexing information OR the Broader term with the [] search tag to search earlier years.

Exercise:

- How far back can I search with Diabetes Mellitus, Type 2 (current MeSH term)? _____
- Where do I look in the MeSH record for terms used prior to 1984?

- What field tag do I use to limit to records indexed between 1966 and 1983? []

4. Hierarchy Changes

MeSH hierarchy changes (e.g., Dietary Proteins) can:

- result in d_____ retrieval changes.
- generally offer an improvement to your e_____.

To adjust your searches:

- Take a fresh look at the new hierarchy and reconsider your search.

5. Other Changes

Other changes, including subheading changes, will be explained in the NLM Technical Bulletin’s [MEDLINE Data Changes](#) article.

For 2019,

the subheading /secretion was changed to /_____ on MEDLINE citations.

MEDLINE records previously indexed with Insulin/secretion are now indexed with: _____.

MEDLINE records previously indexed with Milk/secretion OR Milk, Human/secretion are now indexed with: _____

Summary of Tips:

To adjust to changes in MeSH:

- Check MeSH mappings in your PubMed Search Details
- Check automatic explosions in MeSH
- Use the “Year Introduced,” Previous Indexing guidance and broader terms with [mhda] to craft searches for older records.
- Read about the MeSH changes in October and the year-end changes to MEDLINE in December in the NLM Technical Bulletin.

Useful Links:

[NLM MeSH Homepage](#)

[MEDLINE Year-End Processing News](#)

[Dates in MeSH \(video\)](#)

[MEDLINE Data Changes](#)

[Systematic Review Subset Strategy](#)