Tables

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Additional guidance on how to present text in tables in Cochrane Reviews is in development and will be added to this section.

Types of tables in RevMan Web

There are five types of table available in RevMan Web.

Table	Description	Permitted formatting	Footnotes permitted?
Tables in main text	Used for presenting limited amounts information in tabular format within the main body of text	Same as available within main text plus heading cells, cell alignment, and cell merge	No
'Characteristics of studies' tables	Used for recording the characteristics of studies that are included, excluded, awaiting classification, or ongoing. Each type of study has a number of predefined attributes (methods, participants, interventions, outcomes), and users can include additional attributes.	Same as available within main text	Yes
'Risk of bias' tables	Used for additional characteristics of included studies, such as details of allocation concealment. (These are called 'Assessment of methodological quality tables' in diagnostic reviews.)	Same as available within main text	Yes
'Summary of findings' tables	Can be generated with GRADEproGDT software and imported into RevMan Web	See Grade Profiler software	Yes
Additional tables	Used for tables that are too large or not sufficiently important to be in the main body of text. Each table has a title and can be linked to the main text.	Same as available within main text plus heading cells, cell alignment, and cell merge	Yes

Formatting options

In addition to the formatting that is available within all of the main text, some tables (see [Types of tables in Review Manager 5](#)) have three further options: heading cells, which applies heading style to the cell (shown as bold in RevMan Web); [cell alignment](#), which allows a choice of horizontal and vertical alignments; and cell merge, which allows adjacent cells to be merged together to create a single cell.

Formatting should be consistent within a single table. As with other parts of a Cochrane Review, the visual presentation of tables will change during the publication process; for example, it is important not to use the 'Enter key' within a single block of text (e.g. in a single word if the word runs over two lines) because the text layout will also change during the publication process.

Cell alignment examples

Align left	Align top
Align centre	Align middle
Align right	Align bottom

Width and height

The width and height of tables or individual cells cannot be specified. Instead, cells (and thereby row, columns, and tables) expand automatically to fit the content.

Table title

The title should be concise and reflect the table content. Use sentence case without a full stop at the end.

Column headings

Column headings should be in sentence case and formatted using 'Toggle heading/cell', which applies heading formatting to the cell. This also applies if there are nested column heads (i.e. two rows of column headings); the top heading in nested column heads is likely to be in a series of merged cells that span the relevant columns.

Horizontal alignment: in general, the heading cells should be left aligned. If the table contains nested column heads (see above), then the top row should be centre aligned.

Vertical alignment: column headings should be bottom aligned (instead of top or middle aligned).

Row headings

Tables may or may not have headings for each row. If so, these should be in sentence case and formatted using 'Toggle heading/cell', which applies heading formatting to the cell.

Horizontal alignment: the row headings should be left aligned unless there is good reason to do otherwise.

Vertical alignment: in general, row headings should be top aligned.

Table body

Use sentence case if the content is all or mainly text. Use numbers instead of words in tables (see Exceptions to basic rules for numbers and ordered events less than 10). Only use full stops to end blocks of text when the block ends with a full sentence.

Horizontal alignment: in general, the body cells should be left aligned.

Vertical alignment: vertical alignment of the body cells should be top (instead of middle or bottom). There may be occasions when the cells should be bottom aligned, but this should only be done when it makes sense visually.

Blank cells: avoid blank cells in a table. Insert an em-dash or ellipsis if the column heading does not apply to the cell, or use NA (not applicable) or ND (no data available) if a distinction is needed. Remember to explain these two abbreviations in the footnotes.

Footnotes

Footnotes are a convenient way to define abbreviations and acronyms or display other explanatory notes (see Examples of table footnotes below). Use superscript lower-case letters to denote footnotes. Where a footnote symbol follows punctuation, place the

footnote symbol immediately after the punctuation mark unless it is a dash or closing bracket. Where a footnote refers to a specific point within a sentence, place the footnote symbol immediately after the relevant phrase (see Examples of correct and incorrect positioning of footnote symbols below). The placement of the footnote symbol should go from left to right, followed by top to bottom. When a footnote refers to the whole table, for example referencing the source of the table content, the footnote symbol should go at the end of the table title.

Each footnote needs to be explained. Repeat the superscript letter immediately under the table and follow it with the explanatory text. There is no space between the superscript letter and the explanatory text. Start each footnote on a new line, using a soft return between footnotes (i.e. hold the shift key when pressing return). Footnotes may or may not be full sentences, but if they are full sentences they should end with a full stop.

Examples of table footnotes

Use a superscript letter for a footnote.[a]	The order of footnotes should go left to right, followed by top to bottom.[b]
A third footnote could be used here.[c]	—

[a]Use the same superscript letter in the footnote text below the table.
[b]Footnotes that are full sentences should finish with a full stop.
[c]Start each footnote on a new line. Use a soft return (i.e. hold the shift key when pressing return) between new lines.

Examples of correct and incorrect positioning of footnote symbols

Correct	Incorrect
The analysis does not include the full study.[a]	The analysis does not include the full study [a].
The doses were inconsistent (from 0.5 mg to 10 mg[b]) and reported only once a day.	The doses were inconsistent (from 0.5 mg to 10 mg)[b] and reported only once a day.
The doses[c] were inconsistent (from 0.5 mg to 10 mg).	The doses were inconsistent (from 0.5 mg to 10 mg)[c].

[a]Footnote referring to the full sentence
[b]Footnote referring to the information in parentheses
[c]Footnote referring specifically to the word 'doses'

How to format multiple footnotes

If you need to add multiple footnotes to one statement, use commas to separate the footnote letters but do not add spaces after the commas.

Here is an example.[a,b,c]

In cases where there are a large number of footnotes to be applied, it is acceptable to display a range with a hyphen. This will be a judgement based on the context in the table and should be applied consistently within the table.

Here is another example.[b-h]

If there are a large number of footnotes but the range is not continuous, then a mix of commas and hyphens is necessary.

Sometimes you may need to take this approach.[b,c,f-j]