What is an API?

An API is a set of protocols for contacting a remote system and making requests. APIs typically include:

- A remote computer (or "server") which has information for you to access, and
- A set of rules for making requests (or "calls") to that server.

Building an API URL: MedlinePlus example

The Base URL (do not click; instead, copy and paste into your browser address bar)

Parameters (add this into your browser address bar after the Base URL)
?db=healthTopics&term=acid+reflux&retmax=5

Putting it all together

More Information about NLM APIs and other resources

MedlinePlus
MedlinePlus Web Service
https://medlineplus.gov/about/developers/webservices/
MedlinePlus Connect
https://medlineplus.gov/medlineplus-connect/

PubMed
E-utilities
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK25501/
Literature Citation Exporter
Citation Matcher API

PMC/Bookshelf
E-utilities
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK25501/
OAI-PMH (PMC)
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/tools/oai/

OAI-PMH (Bookshelf)
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/about/oai/

Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)
E.utilities
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK25501/
MeSH RDF
https://id.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/

RxNorm
RxNorm API
https://lhncbc.nlm.nih.gov/RxNav/APIs/RxNormAPIs.html
RxMix
https://mor.nlm.nih.gov/RxMix/

ClinicalTrials.gov
ClinicalTrials.gov API
https://www.clinicaltrials.gov/api/gui

NLM Data Distribution
Portal for accessing NLM data downloads

Data Discovery
Portal for exploring NLM APIs and downloadable datasets
https://datadiscovery.nlm.nih.gov/