

DNA TESTING for Family History: what you **NEED TO KNOW**



Why take a DNA test?

DNA testing can help you:

- Find a close biological relative
- Verify your connection to a specific relative
- Find a missing ancestor

Can DNA testing help me prove or disprove paternity?

Traditional paternity tests compare a person's DNA with that of a man to see whether the man is the person's father. If a presumed father is still alive and willing to test, a paternity test is the easiest way to determine whether he is the father. But paternity tests can't look for other possible fathers. That's what DNA testing for family history may be able to do.

What kinds of results do you get with DNA testing?

Ethnicity: Results that link you to places

- Often represent locations where your family may be from thousands of years ago
- Sometimes they point to recent family locations
- Don't use these to determine relationships to other people
- You can sometimes use these to learn more about a parent's place of origin, especially if your parents were from different places

DNA matches: Results that link you to people

- Your matches are people who have tested at the same testing company who appear to be related to you
- Each match has a range of how they might be related to you, but these are complicated and they always require further investigation
- There are methods you can use to determine how you are related to your DNA matches

What about health information?

Health information does NOT come with a basic DNA test for family history. At some companies, you can pay extra to access health information.

How likely is it that you will find a close biological relative by DNA testing?

- If you have an unknown DNA match who shares more than 900 cM of DNA with you, this match might be able to help you learn more about an unknown parent.
- If your DNA matches are all distant, be patient and wait for closer matches to test. OR do lots of genealogy to see how you're connected. OR do both!
- If you are looking for birth relatives outside of the United States, it is less likely right now that you will find close DNA matches. Go ahead and test, because you won't know until you test whether you will have close matches. Check your test results regularly, because new matches may appear months or years later.

HOW AM I RELATED TO MY DNA MATCHES?

Which DNA test should I take?

Considerations: which sample collection method to use; which company sells DNA tests in your location; privacy

TIP: If you are looking for a missing ancestor, test the oldest living generation on that branch of your family tree.

YOU CAN DO DNA--AND WE CAN HELP.

Start—or continue—your DNA journey with Diahan Southard at Your DNA Guide.

Your specific DNA questions will take you down a unique path. There's a bit of a learning curve and you may sometimes find yourself at a dead end, not knowing where to turn next. Chart your course with step-by-step plans—customized road maps for your DNA journey—in [Your DNA Guide—the Book](#) by Diahan Southard.