

## Three Types of DNA Tests

The type of test you choose depends on what you hope to find.

With any of these three tests, one's genealogy research helps determine how a person is related to those who match the kit by comparing trees and contacting each other via email. Hopefully there will be a match to someone who has additional information and/or photographs to share. DNA testing is growing in popularity and the costs have dropped, which increases the chances of having more matches in the future.

The **Y-DNA test** for genealogy will trace the male's line to his father, to his father, to his father. Females don't have a Y chromosome so they can't be tested with this test. The number of matches one gets is dependent on the number of people who have submitted matching samples. Once a kit is submitted, the person who submitted it can opt to be notified in the future each time someone submits a kit that matches. The minimum level suggested is the 37 marker test. This test is usually \$149 when done through a surname project on FTDNA ([familytreedna.com](http://familytreedna.com)). Sometimes FTDNA has a sale making it about \$119. The more markers tested, the more expensive the test. Samples are saved so upgrades to more markers or other tests can be ordered in the future. If cost prohibits testing at 37 markers, consider testing at 12 markers, the least expensive, as a way to have a sample of the relative saved for future testing.

An **autosomal test** looks at 23 chromosomes that are not X or Y, so both men and women can be tested. It is offered by [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com), [23andme.com](http://23andme.com), and [ftdna.com](http://ftdna.com) for \$99; there are frequent sales reducing the price by \$10 or \$20. The test offered by FTDNA is called Family Finder. The challenge with the autosomal test is determining if the match is to someone on the paternal or maternal line. 23andme used to offer health related information in addition to the genealogy matches, but the FDA suspended that part in November 2013.

The third type of test is **mitochondrial** (mtDNA) through FTDNA. Both men and women can be tested because it is inherited from the mother. For genealogy we trace it back from child to mother to her mother to her mother, etc. One of the challenges using it is that the female's surname changes with each marriage.

A sample is submitted to FTDNA by gently scraping the inside of the cheek with the little brush provided in the kit. Ancestry and 23andme collect a small saliva sample. With any of these three companies, it takes up to 6 weeks to process the kit after it is submitted.