

It is natural for families to want to know who the biological father of their baby is. Nationwide, approximately 30% of tested men are excluded as the biological father.

While the range of reasons for performing a paternity test can vary from financial support to simple peace of mind, perhaps the most important reason is securing your child's legacy. The emotional scars relating to paternity and identity can be much greater on a child when he or she is older and more able to understand.



Determining Paternity

A paternity test is extremely accurate and results are determined through DNA testing of the child, mother and alleged father. A paternity test can be performed without testing the mother; however it does reduce the statistical value of the test. Every effort should be made to test the mother when she is available.

There are two types of paternity tests, private and legal. The only difference between the two types of tests is the documentation procedures used at the time of sample collection. The laboratory methods are identical. A private paternity test can be collected anonymously. Samples for a legal test must be collected or witnessed by a neutral third party with no interest in the test's outcome and proper verification of identity documented for each person.

Private Test

The private paternity test is a quick and economical solution that is perfect for families who are seeking the truth regarding paternity for personal information.

Useful for:

- Families with lingering doubt
- Adult children wanting verification
- Families wanting to know before incurring expensive legal costs

Legal Test

A legal paternity test is a conclusive, legally binding test that uses DNA to determine if a man is the biological father of a child. The primary difference between a legal paternity test and a private paternity test is the Chain of Custody; a documentation process used to ensure that the test results are legally admissible. Samples for a legal test must be collected or witnessed by a neutral third party with no interest in the test outcome. Persons who may qualify include ministers, child support workers, physicians, attorneys and third party administrators. During the collection process, the individuals tested are positively identified through photographs or government issued photo identification.



Useful for:

- Child support
- Custody
- Inheritance
- Immigration

Testing the Alleged Father's Relatives

When an alleged father is not available, paternity can be established indirectly by testing known family members. This type of testing can be performed using grandparents, aunts, uncles or known siblings. The mother of the child should be tested to increase the accuracy of the test.

Forensic Evidence in Paternity Testing

Forensically valuable DNA can be found on evidence that is decades old. Several factors can affect DNA stability, such as sunlight, moisture, bacteria, and mold. Consequently, not all DNA evidence will result in a usable DNA profile. Common sources of forensic DNA evidence include:

- Fingernail clippings
- Hair w/ roots or follicles
- Chewing Gum
- Used Beverage Container
- Eyeglasses
- Hats
- Post mortem tissue
- Lickable stamps or envelopes
- Teeth or dentures
- Toothbrush or toothpick
- Cigarette butt
- Dental floss
- Facial tissue or cotton swab