



### **Beginning Your Search**

A few recommendations / questions to organize your search and information:

1. Put together a file with all the information you have on your birth and adoption, including copies of any birth or adoption documents that you may have and keep some kind of journal to record any progress.
2. Have you or are you working with anyone else to help them find your families? Occasionally we find that some adoptees have contacted other search angels who already have done some work. This prevents duplication of efforts.
3. Do you have non-identifying information provided by an agency? If not, it is one of the first things you should try and get, if available. If your non-identifying information is more than 3-5 years old, please get it updated. If you are unsure as to how to do that, we can help.
4. Are you registered with any state adoption registries? Have you posted your search to any online adoption registries or databases?
5. Depending on which state you were born and/or adopted in, you may already be eligible for original birth certificates or other information. Nineteen states do have some records open, either complete or partial. A list of those can be found at <http://www.familyreedna.com/public/adopted/default.aspx?section=news>

We also recommend you join the yahoo group DNAadoption at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DNAadoption/>.

This group is extremely active with experts in all areas of DNA and adoptee searches. Additional information and instructions can be found at <http://www.dnaadoption.com>

## **DNA**

### **What DNA Test should I take?**

See DNA Tests under Getting Started.

### **I just got my Autosomal Results back. What am I supposed to do next?**

See [Get Started Summary](#) in the [Get Started](#) Section

The page called [The Methodology](#) covers this in detail.

Also see the page titled



## Frequently Asked Questions

Summary of Steps To Take When You Get Your Autosomal DNA Results

### **Where can I get an explanation of DNA and the way it is inherited?**

This Ancestry Blog has an interesting beginning article.

<http://blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry/2014/03/05/understanding-patterns-of-inheritance-where-did-my-dna-come-from-and-why-it-matters/>

This site has several Archived Webinars sponsored by  
FTDNA <http://www.relativeroots.net/webinars/>

### [How DNA is Passed Down](#)

Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation (SMGF) has animations on understanding DNA that you may find helpful. These can now be found at  
<http://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/chromosomes/>

<https://sites.google.com/site/wheatonsurname/beginners-guide-to-genetic-genealogy/lesson-5-introduction-to-atdna>

23andme.com

<http://blog.kittycooper.com/2013/04/the-basics-at-23andme/>

Ancestry.com

<http://blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry/2012/10/22/youve-received-your-ancestrydna-results-now-what/>

FamilyTreeDNA.com

[http://www.isogg.org/wiki/Family\\_Finder](http://www.isogg.org/wiki/Family_Finder)

and some links with more up to date screen shots here:

<http://blog.kittycooper.com/dna-testing/family-tree-dna-basics/>

### **How much DNA do I expect to share with a sibling, half sibling, parent, aunt, 1st/2nd/3rd cousin?**

See this article for the percentages:

[http://www.isogg.org/wiki/Autosomal\\_DNA\\_statistics](http://www.isogg.org/wiki/Autosomal_DNA_statistics)



and this one for the expected number of cMs and segments

[http://www.isogg.org/wiki/IBD#Ranges\\_of\\_total\\_centimorgans\\_of\\_IBD\\_segments\\_expected.2C\\_based\\_on\\_family\\_relationship](http://www.isogg.org/wiki/IBD#Ranges_of_total_centimorgans_of_IBD_segments_expected.2C_based_on_family_relationship)

### **What does that word or that acronym mean?**

We have an extensive [Glossary](#) and an explanation of [Acronyms](#). Check it for complete explanations of the technical terms and acronyms you do not understand. These files can be found under [Reference Docs](#).

### **What is a raw data file?**

This sounds like it is the saliva you sent in to be tested. It is not. This is the computer generated file of information about your DNA. It contains a list of the locations of the bits of your DNA that were tested and what was found at that that location. This file can be downloaded from your DNA testing company and uploaded to GEDMATCH or to other companies.

There are articles about how to do this in the How To's Section. It includes downloading raw data files from FTDNA, Ancestry, and 23andme. GEDMATCH.com also has complete instructions. Companies sometimes change their format slightly which may cause the instructions to change slightly.

### **What is Gedmatch?**

**Gedmatch** is a free, “do-it-yourself” genomics website that allows DNA testers to upload raw data from FTDNA, AncestryDNA, and 23andMe to compare with a large database of data that has been voluntarily uploaded by other testers. Their email address is [Gedmatch@gmail.com](mailto:Gedmatch@gmail.com). The website address is <http://www.gedmatch.com>

As soon as you get your autosomal test results back from any of these companies, you should immediately upload the raw data there. It will take some weeks for the data to be processed and available for all of the optional searches. However, in a day, you should be able to do one to one searches. So if you have a relative who is on GEDMATCH get their kit number.

4.0 generations on GEDmatch = theoretically a common ancestor with your 2nd great grandparents.

1 generation = parents

2 generations = grandparents

3 generations = great grandparents



4 generations = 2nd great grandparents

5 generations = 3rd great grandparents

### **What is DNAGedcom?**

**DNAGedcom** is a free 3rd party site that offers downloads of complete DNA files and data (in text \*.csv format) from FTDNA and 23andMe. It also supports the GedComUtility (GCU) for gedcom comparisons and sponsors Autosomal DNA online classes. Their email address is [support@dnagedcom.com](mailto:support@dnagedcom.com). The website address is <http://www.dnagedcom.com>

### **FTDNA files from DNAGedcom.com**

Hint: The tools at [DNAGedcom.com](http://www.dnagedcom.com) work best with Chrome. They may not work with all other browsers.

If you want to download the information on all of your matches, you have to do it with a tool from DNAGedcom.com. You can't get all of that from FTDNA at one time on your own. Go to DNAGedcom.com, register, sign in. See the FTDNA menu on the top. Select Download Family Tree DNA Data. You have to enter your FTDNA login and password. Be careful. If you don't get this right, it will not work. Follow directions.

This file should usually arrive on your computer in the download subdirectory. It will consist of a three compressed files in a compressed directory (zipped) named [your FTDNA kit number]. If your computer does not automatically unzip the files, right click on the icon, and choose extract all. You will get three files. If you have trouble with the zip file, you can log in to DNAGedcom, go to the "Members" tab, then "View Files". The folders will be on the left hand side. Click on the one you want and the files will show on the right hand side. Double click the file to download individually to your computer.

### **Chromosome browser file from FTDNA**

One of the files you will get from the DNAGedcom.com download is named:

[kit number]\_ChromosomeBrowser.csv The csv extension means that it is a spreadsheet where the entries are separated by commas. You should open this with a spreadsheet program like



Excel or the equivalent. If you have trouble and it is just a big mess when you open it, look in your help file for how to open csv files, i.e., comma separated values.

This file is one of your most valuable tools. It consists of a list of your matches from FTDNA and the information about the location on your chromosomes where that match occurs. For information on what to do with this file, see [The Methodology](#) section on this site.

### **Family Finder file from FTDNA**

Another file you will get from this DNAGedcom.com download is named:

[Kit number]\_Family\_Finder\_Matches.csv

The csv extension means that it is a spreadsheet where the entries are separated by commas. You should open this with a spreadsheet program like Excel or the equivalent. If you have trouble and it is just a big mess when you open it, look in your help file for help opening csv files, i.e. comma separated values.

This file contains a list of all your matches, sorted by largest total number of cM. It includes the full name of the match, match date, relationship, total match, longest segment, the email address if known, and the names listed with their entry. This will also have any notes you have added about the person.

### **ICW file from FTDNA**

The second file you will get from this DNAGedcom.com download is named:

[kit number]\_ICW.csv

The csv extension means that it is a spreadsheet where the entries are separated by commas. You should open this with a spreadsheet program like Excel or the equivalent. If you have trouble and it is just a big mess when you open it, look in your help file for How to Open csv files, i.e., comma separated values.

This file contains some very useful information. It has a list of the people you match along with a list of the people who match both of you. Please remember that this does NOT mean that you match at the same spot on the chromosome. For more on how to use this information, see The Methodology section on this site.



### **I got in a 124 cM match on FTDNA. What does that mean?**

This is the total amount of DNA you share with your match measured in cMs. The higher that number, the closer the relationship.

[http://www.isogg.org/wiki/Identical\\_By\\_Descent\\_segment](http://www.isogg.org/wiki/Identical_By_Descent_segment)

[http://www.isogg.org/wiki/Autosomal\\_DNA\\_statistics](http://www.isogg.org/wiki/Autosomal_DNA_statistics)

### **Where can I go for help with the X Chromosome Inheritance?**

The lists below are taken from Kitty Cooper's post "What does shared X DNA really mean?"  
<http://blog.kittycooper.com/2014/01/what-does-shared-x-dna-really-mean/>

Here are some of the explanations of X inheritance and helpful charts:  
ISOGG's article on the X at <http://blog.kittycooper.com/dna-testing/newbie-faq/>

X marks the spot by Roberta Estes at <http://dna-explained.com/2012/09/27/x-marks-the-spot/>

Steve Handy's post on the X at <http://dnamatches.blogspot.com/2012/07/understanding-x-chromosome-inheritance.html>

Fan charts of X inheritance are available to download on our site. See Files under the image.  
<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/DNAAdoption/info>

## **Adoption Search**

### **Where can I find my own Search Angel?**

There are very few Search Angels and many people requesting their services. Consequently, you need to learn how to do your own search. The goal of DNAAdoption.com is to give you the tools to do this.

If you have a true medical emergency such as the need for a bone marrow donor, go to <http://adoption-free-search.org>. Otherwise, if this is something you feel strongly about, start through the site, take the class, join the list, and get started on this. It can be done. We have many success stories on the site.



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If you need a Search Angel to review your documentation, then post a request on the DNAadoption list or join the Yahooogroup [SoaringAngels](#) to find one. They cannot do your DNA search for you but they can help you along the way.

A Search Angel is a volunteer.

### **What is Non-Identifying information and how do I get it?**

One of the first and most important things an adoptee should get is his/her Non-Identifying information for the adoption agency or the state where the adoption took place. Many times those experienced in finding families can find clues to completely identify a family even before DNA testing. See the article on this site under [For Adoptees](#)

### **How can I download a GEDCOM off FTDNA?**

GEDCOM is an acronym which stands for GENEalogical Data COMMunication . It is a file with the extension .ged containing genealogical information about individuals. The information is in a text file which is set up so that all genealogical software programs can read it and use the information to create trees, family group sheets, etc. Some of your matches on FTDNA will have a GEDCOM attached.

There is a tool on [DNAGedcom.com](#) to do this very easily. This site contains several very valuable tools. You should register, sign in, click on Family Tree Data. There will be a drop down menu that includes downloading GEDCOMS from FTDNA.

Hint: You best use a Chrome browser for this. The tool will not work with all other browsers.

### **I am building trees now. Is there a specific way I should enter the information?**

There some standards for data entry in trees

A birth name establishes the identity of an individual in a genealogy database. Enter the name given at birth (or baptism) in the language used at the time of the event (e.g., French, German, Latin, etc.) in the given name field.

Enter an individual's birth name in the given name field, even if the person was known by another name all their life, and even if that person is identified on a death record by the more familiar name.

Enter maiden names for all females, even if previously married. If a wife's maiden name is



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unknown, leave it blank until known.

Never use special characters in a name field, e.g., braces, brackets, question marks or equal signs

Enter titles in the title suffix field or title prefix field. Explain titles in the research notes field or comments field and document titles in the source field.

In addition, the date form standard for genealogy is dd month yyyy Do not use numbers instead of month names because it adds a possible source of confusion.

Source: <http://www.columbinegenealogy.com/pdfs/Getting%20It%20Right.pdf>

### [How to Build Family Trees](#)

## Spreadsheets

### **Where can I go to learn how to do spreadsheets?**

This is a great video on beginning Excel. You do not need to be an expert on spreadsheets for this. You just need the basics. Even if you don't use Excel, you should watch this. Most of the moves are the same.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kNEv3s8TuA>

### **Do I have to have Excel to take the class?**

The class is written in Excel and the teachers do not have time to go look up how to do the moves in some other format. However, some students have successfully used LibreOffice which can be downloaded free at <https://www.libreoffice.org/>

If you do not use Excel, you can search on Google to find instructions for your spreadsheet. Free lessons are widespread on the internet.

### **Advanced Spreadsheet problems:**

Conditional Formatting is needed for the later lessons. You can find instructions on this for LibreOffice here: [https://help.libreoffice.org/Calc/Conditional\\_Formatting](https://help.libreoffice.org/Calc/Conditional_Formatting)

The larger files from the Ancestry Extension cause LibreOffice and OpenOffice to slow down badly.

To fix this and substantially speed up the experience:  
Start LibreOffice (it doesn't matter which application you load)



Click Tools -> Options.

Click Memory (under LibreOffice).

Increase the Graphics Cache -> Use for LibreOffice value (try 128 MB to start and increase further if needed).

Increase Memory per object (try 20MB to start).

Click OK.

Start OpenOffice (it doesn't matter which application you load)

Click Tools>Options

Select Java menu and uncheck "Use a Java runtime environment"

Select the Memory Tab and change the following options:

Number of steps: 30

Use for Open Office: 128

Memory per Object: 20

Number of Objects: 20

### **General**

**I need to find a living person. How is the best way to do this?**

[Peoplefinder.com](http://peoplefinder.com) has a free part which includes names, addresses, and phones.

[Spokeo.com](http://spokeo.com) may include email addresses

[DOBSearch.com](http://dobsearch.com) is free for the basic and you can also search by birth date.

Also try <https://pipl.com/> or <http://radaris.com/> or <http://www.whitepages.com/>

**I have vision problems and the messages on these sites are too small. Are there accessibility options?**

If you use Chrome or Internet Explorer as a browser, hit the control key down and then use the scroll button on your mouse to zoom in and out.

If you are using Internet Explorer, there are other options here, but they are not as successful.

<http://www.disabled-world.com/disability/accessibility/websitedesign/text-size-internet-explorer.php>

**How do the groups on Yahoo work?**

If you have more than one browser on your computer, use Internet Explorer to go to Yahoo. Some other browsers have problems with Yahoo.



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If you do not have a yahoo account, you will have to sign up for a free email account before you can join a group.

Go to Yahoo.

Click on Groups in the thin black menu at the top.

Search Groups for DNAAdoption. See the purple box below the image. Click there to Join Group. You must request to be added to the list. This is a closed list and membership is by approval or invitation. It is open to anyone seeking unknown family – adoptees, birth parents or anyone looking for unknown ancestors or descendants. We cannot help with minor children searches as it is against the law in most states.

Yahoo will want you to sign in even if you just signed in. That is because Yahoo Mail and Yahoo Groups are separate things.

Then look along the left side for the names of your groups.

We are [DNAAdoption](#)

Click on us and wait until it settles down.

Just under the image, you will see some words which are clickable.

Conversations: Click on this to read previous emails or to send an email on a new topic. For a new topic see small purple box on the right.

Files Click this to see the files. You can click on anything listed. If you figure this out, you should do a beneficiary form for 23andme. Most of them are pdf files which can only be read with Adobe Reader. Most people have this on their computer. It is free to download.

Another option on Yahoo is to click more under the image instead of conversations. One of the items under More is Database. Look there for several interesting files. They are in Word.doc format or .pdf format. Also check under Links.

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/DNAAdoption/info>

### **How do I add my Gedmatch Kit number to the list on our Yahoo Site?**

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/DNAAdoption/database/1/edit>

On the right hand side you will see a search box, next to that Actions, and then + Add Row

### **My mailbox is full of messages. How do I switch to the daily digest format?**



**DNA**  
ADOPTION

## Frequently Asked Questions

There are a lot of members of this group and quite a bit of traffic. You can choose to receive individual emails, a daily digest or even no mail which you can then just read on the group home page. If you don't want all the emails in your mailbox, join the digest version. When you have time, read the messages. You can learn a lot from them. You can change how you receive messages by going back to Yahoo, click on Groups, sign in, look for Manage My Groups on the left. If you click on this, you will see a list of your groups, and can change how you receive messages from any of them. You can even turn it off temporarily.

### **How can I find other groups that I might want to join?**

There are a lot of other groups working on parallel information. For Example:

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/UnknownFatherDNAGroup/info>

DNA Newbie Group. The FAQ for this group are at:

<http://blog.kittycooper.com/dna-testing/newbie-faq/>