

How Does Searching Happen Through DNA Testing?

The “centimorgan” is the unit of measurement for DNA matching. When someone takes a commercial DNA test, they are consenting to be “matched” to other people who have also taken DNA tests and are in the database. You are sent a list of your matches, and how many centimorgans you share with them. Search angels are people who are experts in analyzing the DNA data, and using genealogy searches through the family trees on the DNA site and public records (birth certificates, death certificates, obituaries, yearbooks, newspaper mentions, etc...) to find the person(s) you are looking for. Most search angels work for FREE (many of them adoptees) and do it as a service to adoptees to help them find their families. This process of searching is well established. There is NO legislation you could enact that would prevent this from happening, as all users of the system are doing so consensually. A skilled search angel knows how to analyze the data and public records to find biological family. In this process they also contact dozens of potential and actual DNA relatives of the searcher, letting them know there is an adopted person looking for their parents and family. Many birthparents are NOT in the database. They don’t need to be. DNA DOESN’T LIE.

Approximate Amount of Shared DNA (in centimorgans [cM])	Predicted Relationship
3,475 cM	parent, child, or identical twin
2,400–2,800 cM	immediate family: full sibling
1,450–2,050 cM	close family: grandparent, aunt, uncle, half-sibling
680–1,150 cM	1st cousin, great-grandparent
200–620 cM	2nd cousin
90–180 cM	3rd cousin
20–85 cM	4th cousin
6–20 cM	distant cousin: 5th to 8th cousins