

*We've recently made some significant changes that improve our ability to identify DNA matches. Here are some answers to questions you might have.*



### **Why have my DNA matches changed?**

We're continually working to find improved ways to make family history discoveries through DNA. We've updated our matching methods, which may improve the accuracy and quality of your results. Individual results may vary depending on your unique set of DNA results. To learn more about the science behind the update, [read the Tech Roots blog](#).

### **Are my matches more accurate now?**

Yes. Although individual results may vary, more data and improved algorithms mean that we can better detect who you are more likely to be related to through a recent common ancestor. Now that we have 1.5 million people in the database we can make this update to improve accuracy.

### **Does this change my ethnicity estimate?**

No, this update is to the DNA matching service only.

### **I'm waiting for my results. Will I get this update?**

Yes, in addition to existing AncestryDNA customers receiving the update, new AncestryDNA results published going forward will automatically receive the benefit of this update.

### **What kind of changes should I expect to see?**

While individual results may vary, we expect very few changes to your DNA match list for very close matches (immediate family up to 3rd cousins). We expect you to have new DNA matches in the more distant relationships. So, many customers will have new matches to explore.

DNA matches that no longer appear on your list have been removed, as the more precise DNA matching algorithm no longer predicts that they are connected to you through a recent common ancestor.

This will also affect DNA Circles and New Ancestor Discoveries, which are powered by DNA matching.

### **How do I see the new DNA matches based on the new algorithm?**

Simply go to your DNA homepage, select "view all DNA matches" and then select "new" from the list of filter options at the top of the page. A list will be pulled of all the matches you haven't seen yet.

### **Why has the predicted relationship or confidence level for a match I had previously been changed in the new results?**

This is likely to happen because we have advanced the way we identify how much DNA you share with another person. For example, you may see that a 4th cousin of yours drops to a 5th-8th cousin, or perhaps you actually share more DNA than previously thought and that bumps them up to a 3rd cousin relationship.

### **What happens to the DNA matches that no longer appear on the list?**

If you have taken notes or “starred” a DNA match that no longer appears on your new list, you can download information about that previous match from the DNA test settings page. This will be available for a limited time, so you should download any such information as soon as you can (no date has been set for when this will no longer be available).

### **Why has a high-confidence DNA match gone away?**

It is likely that a match we thought once was strong could go away because the DNA matching algorithm no longer predicts that you share a recent common ancestor. This is a good change because we have identified that this match was not likely to be from a common ancestor.

### **How can I see the notes or list of starred matches for the DNA matches that no longer appear on my list?**

You can download this information by going to the DNA test settings page and selecting “Download expired matches.”

This will be available for a limited time, although no date has been set for when this will no longer be available.

### **Where can I see the messages I exchanged with a DNA match that no longer appears on my list?**

If you sent or received messages from a DNA match that is no longer in your match list, you can view the message in the message center. And you will still have the option to continue to send messages.

### **Will this change my DNA Circles, New Ancestor Discoveries, or Shared Ancestor Hints?**

Because these features (currently in beta release) rely on DNA matches, you might gain or lose DNA Circles, New Ancestor Discoveries, or Shared Ancestor Hints.

### **Will my AncestryDNA matches change again in the future?**

As the science behind DNA matching continues to advance, and we gather data from more individuals taking the AncestryDNA test, new DNA matches are possible at any time.

### **How do you determine who my matches are?**

We analyze DNA from about 700,000 markers you inherited from your parents. Then we compare your DNA to the DNA of every other AncestryDNA customer. We look for places where your DNA overlaps by a significant amount, which means we can be confident that you both share DNA from a recent ancestor. If you’d like to learn more about how matching is determined, check out this [video](#).

### **Do I need to take a new AncestryDNA test?**

No, the great news is the new algorithm is backwards compatible and you don’t need to take another test to get the most out of the AncestryDNA experience.

**Is now a good time to take the AncestryDNA test?**

Absolutely. All new DNA tests will automatically be processed using the updated DNA matching algorithm. The sooner you take the test, the sooner you will start having discoveries of your own.

**Does every AncestryDNA test include DNA matching?**

Yes, every test includes a list of possible DNA matches and an ethnicity estimate.

## **Advanced user questions**

**The amount of DNA I share with a match has changed. Why is that?**

The amount of DNA shared with matches you had previously can increase or decrease based on a couple of improvements in this update.

Most importantly, we now measure the amount of shared DNA more precisely, which can pick up short amounts of shared DNA that were left out previously.

Additionally, with the filtering algorithm we call Timber, we re-match both genotypes with the rest of the database to update the weighting factors in Timber. That can increase or decrease the amount of sharing reported. Read more about Timber [here](#).

**Do the new updates change the way you run Timber?**

Timber is only used on matches that are 3rd cousin and more distant. We don't use this on close matches (parent/child through 2nd cousins). The way we run Timber hasn't changed. Read more about Timber [here](#).

**Will the updates mean a change in how you report the amount of segments shared between two individuals?**

You may see the amount of shared segments between your matches change. The amount of sharing reported is more accurate now because it is measured more precisely than before—[read this blog post](#) to learn how we have updated the matching algorithm. You will learn from the post the different ways we have improved the matching process, including phasing, and now we use the actual markers to get start and stop points on the shared segments.

**Have you changed the cutoff amount of shared DNA to determine a match?**

Yes, we have changed the amount of DNA you need to share to be considered a match with another individual from 5 centimorgans (cMs) to 6cMs.