

Understanding Your Paternity DNA Test Results

A simple guide to the numbers you will see on your report

Prepared for informational purposes only
This guide explains the main numbers and what they typically mean.
It is not a substitute for professional genetic counseling.

1. The Two Key Numbers on Your Report

A. Combined Paternity Index (CPI)

(also called Combined Paternity Index or Parentage Index)

This number combines the results from all tested genetic markers. It shows how many times more likely it is that the tested man is the biological father compared to a random unrelated man.

Typical interpretation:

- **CPI > 100** (often much higher, e.g., thousands to millions) → Extremely strong support for paternity
- **CPI > 1** → Supports paternity (higher = stronger evidence)
- **CPI < 0.01** (or 0) → Strong evidence **against** paternity (exclusion)
- **CPI around or below 1** → Rare; usually indicates exclusion or very weak support (additional testing needed)

Most conclusive paternity inclusions have CPIs in the thousands or higher.

B. Probability of Paternity

This is the final percentage most people look at first. It estimates the chance (expressed as a percentage) that the tested man is the biological father, assuming he is not excluded.

Common ranges and meanings:

- **99.99% or higher** (often 99.999%+) → Extremely strong evidence of paternity (considered conclusive in almost all cases)
- **> 99%** → Very strong support for paternity
- **< 1%** (or 0%) → Strong evidence **not** the biological father (paternity excluded)
- **Between 1% and 99%** → Rare in standard testing; usually indicates need for more markers or re-testing

Important: A result of 0% or very low probability means paternity is excluded — the tested man cannot be the biological father.

2. Quick Reference Table

Combined Paternity Index (CPI)	Probability of Paternity	Most Likely Interpretation
Extremely high (1,000+)	99.99%+	Extremely strong evidence of paternity
High (100 – 1,000)	99% – 99.99%	Very strong support for paternity
Moderate (1 – 100)	50% – 99%	Supports paternity (but less conclusive)
Very low (< 0.01)	0% or < 1%	Paternity excluded (cannot be the father)
0 (exclusion at one or more markers)	0%	Definitive exclusion – not the biological father

Note: Inclusions are probabilistic (extremely high probability), while exclusions are definitive — if even one marker shows a mismatch that cannot be explained, paternity is ruled out.

3. Important Things to Know

- These are **statistical probabilities** based on population genetics. A very high probability (99.99%+) is considered conclusive for inclusion in virtually all practical contexts.
- **Exclusions are absolute:** If the tested man does not share expected genetic markers with the child, he cannot be the biological father — no amount of additional testing will change that.
- Including the biological mother in the test makes results **much clearer** and increases the Combined Paternity Index for true fathers.
- Rare genetic mutations or chimerism can occasionally affect results, but these are extremely uncommon.
- Standard paternity tests use 15–24+ genetic markers; more markers = higher CPI and more conclusive results when the man is the father.
- This test is for personal knowledge only. It is not intended for legal, court, immigration, child-support, or custody purposes unless chain-of-custody procedures were followed.

We hope this guide helps you understand your report more easily.

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