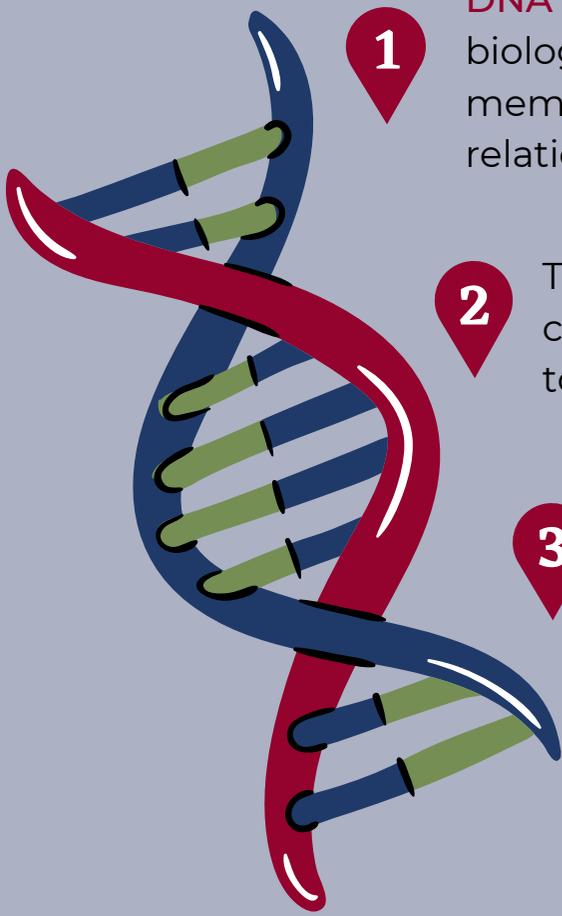


# DNA



Increasingly, First Nations are considering DNA as a criteria for band membership.

## DNA TESTING



1

**DNA Fingerprinting** can be used to help identify biological relationships between immediate family members, for example to test for a biological relationship between parents and children.

2

There exists other types of DNA testing that can measure someone's genetic proximity to a **larger population**.

3

There is **no DNA testing that can measure someone's genetic proximity to Indigenous nations**.

In summary, although DNA testing can be useful for measuring close biological relationships between individuals, it does little for connecting people genetically with Indigenous nations outside kinship based-relationships.

## DRAWBACKS

With advancements in DNA testing technology, some bands are considering integrating it into their membership codes. But when DNA is used as a sole measurement for tribal identity and belonging it can have certain drawbacks. It is important to keep in mind that:

1

**Kinship is broader than genetic proximity.** It can be established through birth, but also through marriage and adoption.

2

DNA testing might relate to First Nations traditional practices of determining belonging in certain instances, but it **does not replace them**.

3

An overreliance on DNA can lead to "reracializing" Indigenous nations just at the moment when many First Nations and American tribes are **gaining more ground as political - rather than mere biological - entities**.

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This fact sheet is based on the works of Kim TallBear [Kim TallBear, *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 101-2]; James Sákéj Youngblood Henderson [James Sákéj Youngblood Henderson, *First Nations Jurisprudence and Aboriginal Rights: Defining the Just Society* (Saskatoon: Native Law Centre, University of Saskatchewan, 2006), 150-51]; and Jessica Bardill [Jessica Bardill, "Tribal Enrollment and Genetic Testing," accessed November 28, 2020, <http://genetics.ncai.org/tribal-enrollment-and-genetic-testing.cfm>].