

# HipPocraies

Eugene Schoenfeld M.D.

1971

## Dear Dr. Schoenfeld,

Is there a blood test which can conclusively determine paternity? If not, is there another test or are there other tests being developed to determine exactly who the father is?

I don't really know how the test is done but I can imagine that a few cubic centimeters of blood are needed from both the suspected father and the child. My son is only 8 months old. Is it all right for the test to be performed at this early age?

I hope you can answer me immediately. I would like a blood test done before one of the two possibilities leaves next month.

ANSWER: Blood tests in paternity disputes can determine if a man definitely could not have fathered the child in question. But I know of no test which conclusively proves a man is the father.

A paternity test simply involves typing the blood of the baby and suspected father. Blood is classified as A, B, AB or O and these blood types are inherited characteristics. Many other sub-types exist but we needn't discuss them to basically understand how we inherit our own particular blood type.

The factors causing blood type O are genetically recessive while those causing blood types A, B, and AB are genetically dominant. If a baby's blood is O for example, both his parents must have had type O blood. Finding a different blood type in a candidate for father would exclude him as a possibility.

But suppose the baby has type O blood and one of your friends has type O blood as well. That doesn't prove he is the father. Remember that paternity tests can't identify the lucky guy, they can only disprove paternity if the blood types don't match genetically.



Dr. Eugene Schoenfeld speaking at Community Arts Auditorium, May 28, 1969 at a benefit for Open City.  
Photo: Alan Gotkin.

Sometimes courts overlook scientific facts. Charles Chaplin was involved in a paternity suit once and tho blood typing proved he could not have been the father, he lost the case. Good luck.

## **Dear Dr. Schoenfeld:**

Since your column lately has contained many letters regarding trichomonas and yeast infections and the dread “non-specific vaginitis,” here is my theory for whatever it’s worth.

I had something or other of this sort on and off for 8 years. But I haven’t had a symptom for about a year. This is without any medication or change in habits and I am still on the pill as I have been for 6 years.

The difference? My present lover has blood type O-negative (I am O-positive). Previous periods of worst suffering involved two men, both type A. Since antigens and antibodies do appear in semen, saliva and vaginal fluid (I mean the anti-factors associated with ABO blood types), maybe blood type is a factor in those infamous itches. Wonder if anyone else has noticed anything like this?

ANSWER: Some infertility problems in females have been traced to antibody reactions to the male’s seminal fluid. So maybe you’re on to something important though one can’t make conclusions from a sample of one.

But can we now expect to find blood typing reagents on milady’s side table? Will love be vanquished by microscope slides and agglutination reactions? The answer to “What type of person do you like?” may be even more complicated than we know!

Dr. Schoenfeld welcomes your letters. Write to him at: 2010 Seventh Street, Berkeley, California. DEAR DR. HIPPOCRATES is a collection of letters and answers published by Grove Press at 95 cents paperbound.

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