

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a birthmother. My daughter was reluctantly relinquished for adoption in 1969. I was barely 19 and felt I had no other options. At that time, my family and society in general condemned my situation, and there was no support for the idea of keeping my child. At the time, I provided all of the family medical history that I had, but both the baby's father, who I later married, and I were healthy teenagers.

Fortunately, in a story too long to tell, my husband and I were reunited with our daughter in 1988. It was bittersweet, and while she is technically someone else's daughter, we've stayed in touch. We've shared valuable medical information that was unknown to me when she was relinquished. My husband, who died two years ago, was diagnosed with psoriatic arthritis in his fifties. Our daughter has it, and so does her daughter. It runs in families, and like many illnesses, early detection leads to better outcomes. I was diagnosed with aggressive skin cancer in my twenties. Both of my parents had it, although diagnosed later in life. My daughter slathers herself and her children with sunscreen, and so far they've avoided the trauma of disfiguring surgeries. Between my husband and me, our families have strong histories of heart disease, diabetes, and colon cancer – none of which I knew at the time my daughter was relinquished.

People who are not adopted take their family medical histories for granted and cannot imagine going through life without knowing what they might face. If heart disease, or cancer, or Alzheimer's was common in your family, wouldn't you want to know and be empowered to live your life in a way that minimizes the risks? We all have that right – except for adopted people who don't know anything about their genetic families. You have the opportunity to correct this unfairness, and I urge you to do the right thing when the time comes to vote on this issue. Please unseal your records and give these now adult people the opportunity to learn about their origins. I am a birthmother. I know other birthmothers. I do not know one who would object to giving their relinquished children the medical information that could improve their chances for a long and healthy life.

Sincerely,

Linda Dryansky  
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