

Transcript

Guest Expert Ashley Koff, OMG GMO's

Keri:

Okay. Hi Ashley!

Ashley Koff:

Hello, I love this.

Keri:

I'm so excited, and this is so fun. I know every time I get on Skype to do one of these interviews, I get so excited because I'm so excited, everybody so far that I've interviewed for these Nutrition School interviews have been somebody that I want to say love, adore, and respect and admire immensely. So I get so excited every time I say hello on this interview, but also just in general, so happy to see you.

Ashley Koff:

I know.

Keri:

So happy to see right now.

Ashley Koff:

Yeah, it's so much more fun.

Keri:

It is so much more fun talking like this. So Nutrition School peeps, friends, I want to introduce you to, the one and only Ashley Koff. And you may know Ashley Koff, registered dietitian, but if you don't know her, I'll just give you a little bit about her, a little bit of background, but you'd definitely have to check out Ashleykoffrd.com for her complete bio with all the a million amazing things she has done. But just little background, Ashley and I have known each other for years. I mean, years

upon years. She is a registered dietician and one of the dieticians I have to say that I really respect and admire more than anyone. I mean she's just absolutely a rock star dietician and has always just been an incredible wealth of knowledge, incredibly responsible with the education and the information that she gives to not only her patients and clients but also to the public.

Keri:

Which brings me to the fact that you probably have seen Ashley in the media. She's been on almost every show, but you see her on Dr. Oz a lot and everywhere else. She's got a fantastic private practice. She's worked with a lot different brands, so she has done a lot. The reason I want to talk to Ashley today, aside from the fact that she is an incredible dear friend and a dietician that I love, respect and adore and I always want to talk to Ashley. The reason I want to talk to her today with all of you watching is because she is really the guru, go-to when it comes to anything GMO. And which brings me just to a point in general that we all want to make sure that, if we are not exactly an expert in something like it's okay to reach out to other experts.

Keri:

And recently, I'm going to start with a little story before we dive into this. I was doing something for, I believe it was Access Hollywood who I do a lot of work with and it was on GMOs, and I felt pretty good about my take on it and I'd read something, it was when something had just happened in the news. Anyway, making a very long story short, I called Ashley and was like, what do you feel about this and how do you think I'm expressing my points? And she gave me incredible feedback and constructive criticism and education and we had an awesome conversation about it. So it was great, her support, I think which is also just a good thing that we get to, it's great to support not only other dietitians, other people in the health world, all of us out there should always be supporting.

Keri:

And it's also good to know when you need to go to another expert, and it's awesome to have these different experts in your life. So, without further ado, let's get into the topic today. The topic today is OMG, GMOs, everything you need to know. So let's get started. Ash, I mean GMOs is a topic that ... I mean, most people watching this, again, they're nutrition school students and or alum, so they're in health and wellness. Some are dietician, some are yoga instructors, some are trainers. We've got a variety of people in our school, but they're all somewhat knowledgeable obviously, we're not consumers but I still think whether it's for us as nutrition school peeps or us teaching our clients

patients. First of those are two different levels of sort of education that you need, and I still think it's really confusing. So I guess just to start, why don't you give us the 411 on GMOs and where we're at.

Ashley Koff:

Yeah. And it's interesting you tell that story and remember like with Access Hollywood then we were like writing something and I'm like, you know what? I'll put it up on a blog and then if you need it, we've got that. And as soon as I put it out on Twitter, I got like all of these people and one particular man in particular that was like, oh, you're just another food babe, you're science hating and just like totally was so mean to me, which I'm totally useful. Those are easy, like I just laughed at it and this other guy wrote and was like, you're actually totally wrong, it'd be great if you could learn about science. And when I actually said to him, I said, so first of all, thank you for just pointing out that I'm wrong, let me know how I'm wrong. And he actually responded to me. And the interesting thing was I was wrong-

Keri:

You're never wrong. What do you mean?

Ashley Koff:

Start off this interview telling you I have been wrong about GMOs all the time. Here's where the challenge comes in. I started my career off in advertising, so Kellogg's was my client. I was out there so I've been wrong a lot, let me be clear, I have no problem saying that. But what I had done was I tried to make this discussion simple in my blog and I tried to say something like, when something gets injected into or when we manipulate in the DNA and-

Keri:

I remember this by the way.

Ashley Koff:

Yeah, and he took a science and he said, that's actually not what's happening, and you know what? I wrote back and I said thank you, and I said, can you help me with how you would actually say it properly? And we engage back and forth. Then I got the, Hey, I was totally wrong about you, thank

you for making the information. I totally disagree with you, but now the information is correct. And so there is the nugget in there that I want to share at the start of this.

Ashley Koff:

So first of all, and I think the best analogy is a dear friend of mine early on when I was learning about GMOs said this," she's like, do you remember what a fax machine used to be?" She's like, do you remember ... I do, because I used to smear the backs of my hands because you were doing the, what are those pages even called? That you wrote on them and they had multiple layers and that was how the copy machine and then it got that-

Keri:

Oh my God, I forgot that.

Ashley Koff:

Right, we totally forgot about that. And today, we can fax from our phones like over to something. And what she said is, she's like, I think what we'll ultimately know is that GMOs that we have today are very much like those early fax machines. So I think the thing that we have to be really careful as educators, and we know this from a health standpoint, and we certainly know from the nutrition world, is that nothing is ever just right or wrong. So if you accept in the space of GMOs that we're in the gray, then I think that that's a much more effective place for all of us to come from.

Ashley Koff:

And the second part is, there's really a challenging definition. So when I say GMOs, I'm talking about genetically modified organisms. That's going to be really important. What I'm talking about there is the seed or now with salmon, we have to expand from that, the animal or whatever we want to call it, that's being genetically modified, but that is different than biotechnology. So the first place that you can run into trouble is if somebody says, Oh, I'm anti biotechnology. Now you're going to run into a big issue there because most of our medications and a lot of our medical advancements and things like that fall under the large umbrella of biotechnology.

Ashley Koff:

Then there's also genetic engineering, and genetic engineering can be, it could be GMOs, but it could be other genetic manipulations. Then there's this other space that we know in terms of like, with seeds and things like that. It's like hybrids, where we've created like, I don't even know how to pronounce it, but where they talk about the plu-out, the plum combined with an apricot, or what we've also learned is they're selective breeding. So over time what has happened for example with something like wheat is that it's been selectively bred. And so we know that the wheat today, Oh, I think that's kind of a pun like wheat bred. Anyway, it's been selectively bred. And so where we arrived today is that we have the primary wheat that's grown, has more gluten and these sorts of things, but it's not genetically modified.

Ashley Koff:

I think that's really important for us to understand because when we talk about GMOs, where they are today, we're talking about genetic manipulation in the seed. So things like, which unfortunately we may see soon, somebody got the genius idea in Canada that the real problem with why we're not eating apples is because when you bite into them or when you cut them, they brown, so now let's create an apple that doesn't brown. And they were like, this is the answer to school lunches, which horrifies me because now we're also talking about kids. And what they've done there is they've just taken away an enzyme. So we've just removed an enzyme so that browning doesn't occur.

Ashley Koff:

Now, what happens with that? So the first thing that I have an issue with is that apple still gets to be called an apple. That apple will be called a red apple, a green apple. In some instances it might actually, because somebody owns the patent on this, it might have a name, it could be called like say the guy's name was like Rouget. It could be called Rouget's apple, right? But the average person doesn't know Rouget's Apple means that it doesn't brown and it's this. And what we know is when we pull an enzyme out that we have effected change in that organism in the entire apple. And what we don't know is maybe the enzyme that allows something to brown, 25 years from now also allows your body to not get diabetes.

Ashley Koff:

Because what we know about the beta cells from a diabetic standpoint, and I was actually just reading, which is amazing, is that we may have found an enzyme that can help diabetics convert sugar better. So it's really this oversimplification of, Hey, we just took an enzyme out of there, don't worry. Or in the case of the genetically engineered salmon, when we talk about that, we're talking about a salmon that is now going to grow at multiple exponential growth in the same amount of time. So what I like to say about that is like, do you want your one year old to grow to become a four year old body at age one? I would say no, I would like to go one, two, and when we eat a salmon that does all of that, what's happening in the body. And so the interesting that comes down with GMOs in this space is that there is science. So I need to be really clear about that.

Ashley Koff:

The science that is being done is to figure out how they can be doing this and they're testing in different places to figure out what the impact is. The problem that I have and where I think we have to be like laser focused, is that we don't have long term human studies on consumption of this. And we also don't know what quantity is appropriate. So could it be that a small amount of GMO soy like or GMO, whatever, I want you to soy because it's a hot button but these non Browning apples. If you ate one Apple every six months it could be fine for you.

Ashley Koff:

But what if eating two apples is what turns on an autoimmune disease in somebody? Or what about if somebody's actually already sick? Like for example, Sloan Kettering, what if you're at the cancer hospital and that hospital wants to say, "Hey, healthy diet GMOs could totally be part of it." But for healing the body from cancer until we know more about it, we want to make sure that we're giving people the purest food possible and they don't have the science. We don't know if a person who actively has cancer consumes GMOs, if that's a factor in them not getting well or in their healing process. So when it comes to all of that, I think we have an understanding of where our responsibility really lies. Until which time there is human health safety studies. And that raises a lot of questions and issues and things like that. And I won't get into all of the politics about it. I write about it, but quite honestly, there are people that are better to discuss the politics.

Ashley Koff:

But until that time, I don't feel as a licensed medical practitioner that I can do what I believe I meant to do, which is first do no harm. Because I just don't know the information. So that also brings me to another area, and I don't know if any of you have gotten this, but I get it all the time as I said, people not only tell me I'm wrong, they spew, "You're so anti science." And I love it too because I love writing... I try to actually not engage that's probably the topic of a whole other costume. How to handle the haters is probably not a topic of another-

Keri:

We need to do a webinar on that.

Ashley Koff:

Totally right? And it's like go with love, don't answer it. But I would like to say, I do have a medical license, I have two medical letters after or two letters representing a license after my name. I have continuing education and I had to take science courses to do that and I work with the hospital in a hospital and you're writing to me that I hate science and you've maybe only taken high school science. So you know what I mean? Let's come into that place. But here's the interesting thing for me, it's actually my passion for science, my passion for science, but then what makes me a dietitian and not a scientist working in a research lab is what I call the age factor. And that's the human factor. And so whatever I'm trying to explain this to someone is I basically just say, "Look there might be things happening in a science lab that can happen and that's totally awesome and cool."

Ashley Koff:

And there could be, and I'll get to that in one moment. There could be GMOs that are really important in the future for us. We have a really screwed up environment and resources and all these other things. But the ones that we have right now don't make me feel safe. Now another reason to add to that is this whole question of glyphosate. Now there's been a confusion glyphosate is a pesticide. It might even be an herbicide I would have to actually double check on that-

Keri:

Will you just spell that for everybody so everybody knows exactly what you're saying?

Ashley Koff:

And a lot of times glyphosate is people think glyphosate is the GMO, they think it's the G in GMO. So it's G-L-Y-P-H-O-S-A-T-E. Now glyphosate is what is owned by Monsanto and is what the World Health Organization just deemed a likely carcinogen. And is what is a huge part of the political, the anger, the money quite frankly, the haters being paid to hate like all of this around this because glyphosate is used. So basically in some of the GMOs that are out there, if we talk about soy, if we talk about corn, basically the way that they are genetically modifying that organism. And remember they're doing it at the seed level, which means that as soon as the seed goes into the ground, it's in everything that comes out of that seed, i.e the whole plant.

Ashley Koff:

To make it resistant to be able ... So it actually makes it to be able to tolerate that glyphosate. So what we found in different studies, and it is an increased amount of glyphosate usage on the GMO plant. And the other thing is the GMO seeds are owned by the same company that creates the glyphosate. And again, that's a business question in a whole discussion there. What we do know about glyphosate is glyphosate and again, we don't know what levels because we can't test it because it's owned by them. But if it's owned by Monsanto, but we do know that that is harmful for human health in different capacities.

Ashley Koff:

So let's go now to what we do need to know. There are certain times in life where we should be epically focused on what we put in and on our body. I believe we should always be focused but if I'm talking about epic focus, I'm going to talk about prenatal, I'm going to talk about early childhood development and I'm going to talk about when the body is not working optimally. So either disease, chronic disease or maybe you have had surgery or you're trying to heal or as I was mentioning cancer.

Ashley Koff:

So in these instances, what you have is you have healthcare practitioners who have come out and said in the whole world of what I'm trying to advise my patients in this space, this is the time where I need to strive for almost perfection from a quality standpoint because I need to help the body help

itself. And that to me was really the calling point because that's usually when people come to see us. That's the place where people are saying, "Hey, I want your help because I could probably pretty good, but now I'm supposed to eat like closer to perfect and how do I do that?"

Ashley Koff:

So actually being able to recommend non-GMO feels very difficult because we don't have a national label. I believe we have the right to know what's in our food, whether it's how much sodium it is, whether it's got trans fats, whether it's got high amount of fiber, whether that fiber or synthetic or whether that fiber comes from the food. All the things are on our food label. So I think it's ridiculous that we don't find out if something has been genetically manipulated. That goes back to my, an apple is that genetically modified should not just be called an apple conversation. But I think in this time period it becomes really challenging. But what I want to give you guys is what I call everybody uses that kiss acronym, but I am just like I say, keep it simple sweetheart.

Ashley Koff:

And whenever I'm talking to someone, especially in this space, it's like we got to keep it as simple as possible. So the simplest thing that you can do is recommend organic. And the reason that in recommending organic is twofold. So in organic regulations, you cannot use a genetically modified seed. So that means from the get go, you have the best guarantee that it is not going to be GMO. It is a fallacy and you should never write that something is GMO-free because since we have GMOs in our world and our food supply today, all it takes is one bird to pick up a seed somewhere and poop it out somewhere else. And you have GMOs.

Ashley Koff:

So you have organic foods that will test for the presence of glyphosate or GMO, but they shouldn't test as GMO containing. And that's really what the non-GMO project has gone in and found out and verified and done on that part. So organic is your best bet. The other reason though that organic is your best bet, and I think this is really important, even though the title today, today's OMG GMO, the OMG and this is if you only focus on GMOs and you don't think about everything else from the quality of your food, then you run into a place that's totally inappropriate.

Ashley Koff:

So if you go now and tell your patients, which plenty of people do and plenty of companies do and they say, "Our product is non-GMO." And I'm like, that's great. There's nothing nutritionally awesome in your product. It might be not, you're like great, non-GMO soda, but like I don't need anything else that's in there or it's rife with other it's high-

Keri:

It's like cholesterol free potato chips. That's great-

Ashley Koff:

Yeah exactly.

Keri:

There was never cholesterol.

Ashley Koff:

Totally you're like-

Ashley Koff:

Your like gluten free water like we're good. So I think on that part, it's probably a bad example cause water's good for you. But anyway, so I think on that part that's the reason that I recommend organic and I do believe organic makes it simple. And so what I do for my patients, and I have a whole GMO, a PDF and a course on this on my site. If you need more information or to refer anyone. But what I do is basically just identify currently there are about eight or nine foods that are genetically modified. And it becomes difficult to explain that in a second but of those foods, make sure that you're buying those that are organic. And in addition, if those are things that you're consuming frequently or if they find your way into your skincare products or your beauty care products also pay attention there that knows you're going to be the ones that you definitely want to have organic.

Ashley Koff:

If you only have a crook neck squash once in 10 years of your life, I'm not so worried if that's organic, I.e non-GMO. Now the issue with the non-GMO foods is that they include soy, it includes corn, it includes beach sugar. When you have all of those, those go by so many different names. Do you know that if it just says sugar or white sugar or refined sugar on your food packaging label, that could be beat sugar because that's from the U.S and that could be GMO. So unless it says cane sugar or unless it says coconut sugar or less, those sorts of things, then you're not going to know that it's non-GMO. With corn, it gets way worse. We have cornstarch, we have, my mind is totally blank. We have a lot of things with corn, with soy, we have like 10 but with things that people don't know that that's what they are and that that's where they can find it.

Ashley Koff:

Now, soy is an interesting one because soy lecithin is in like a gazillion different products. And so a lot of times I'll say to people, if it's in the less than 2% of an ingredient, I might be more comfortable with it. However, if it's something that you're having all the time, like if that's your almond milk or whatever it is, then yeah, I would look for the one that's the sunflower lecithin, et cetera. So on that note, one of the areas, and this is where we really get into the secret nuggets of the healthcare side and this is where your nutrition school, I think Keri can be so much more helpful to people than say a magazine article or show or that sort of thing.

Ashley Koff:

So in that space, I'm usually never able to touch supplements, and I just have to mention it for a second because one of the things that I think is the most blasphemous or frustrates me the most is we actually do not need to ever take a dietary supplement. We know for health reasons that they can improve and they can be part of our therapy and they can be so good for us, but we know that we never need to take one. So we're choosing to take one or we're recommending one to improve somebody's health on that part. So it's something that we're doing from our health improvement. If your supplement is based in GMOs, then you turn around and this goes even bigger, if it's based in junky or chemical isolates, but if it's got GMOs in it, then that's actually going to be a place where I'm like, look, you're taking it on a daily basis.

Ashley Koff:

You're also taking something that's highly concentrated or potent. That makes no sense to me. So that's one of the places that as you talk to your patients about this, I think it's really important to evaluate and say, yes, it might be that that's a cheaper calcium, but when I look at the second ingredient or when it says the other ingredients, and it says like modern modified cornstarch or whatever it is in there, that those ingredients in there are what really perturbed me. And that was actually one of the main reasons that I started doing the supplements. I have that nonprofit project where I've evaluated over 60,000 products now for Ashley Koff Approved, and one of the big things for me was to make sure that supplements to the best of my ability, we're not going to have the the GMO piece in it.

Ashley Koff:

So I think all ... That's my whole take on that piece of it, and then the second part of it is just a real like for me to all of you, please, please be part of, in whatever capacity you can, whether it's your voting or whether it's talking to people or whether it's writing your representatives a letter. It is just embarrassing that the idea of ... We're not talking about a ban of GMOs, what we'll talking about is basically saying we just want to have the right to know so that a hospital like Sloan Kettering or so that your kids kindergarten or any of these other places or restaurant, if they want to serve non-GMO and know that they can and have it be not a marketing term, but have it actually be validated that we could have a national label that could just help us on this part.

Ashley Koff:

And by the way, 68 other countries around the world have it, including really bastions of democracy, like Saudi Arabia, Russia, places that really care about, you know ... I mean, we're not talking about places that are, it's not just like Sweden says, no GMOs on that part. So I think it's really important and whenever you do have questions to bring it back to how we started, I'm here, any of us are here, and we just want to direct it to, Hey, I'm a healthcare provider or a health coach or any of these other things. This is why I'm choosing not to have it if that resonates with you then, or if you're coming to me for my advice, then this would be the reason. And the hater is going to hate, just let them be like on that part.

Keri:

Well, it's so funny on that point, I was going to go back actually to the one of the first things we talked about, that person that had all those comments to you after we had that dialogue about GMOs. I spoke about it on TV and then you did the blog on it. I remember we talked about that right after, and I remember seeing his posts on Twitter and I remember thinking it's so funny. And this is something for everybody out there also to think about again, it's like if somebody attacks you with something, sometimes it's just somebody being a cranky hater and just ignore them. But sometimes it's somebody looking to be so aggressive and really it's funny like if you were sitting there having coffee with them, they would never address you like that.

Keri:

They would say actually, Hey Ashley, you know what? Can I just fill you in on the science there? Because I think it would be such like a normal conversation of educating each other. So when you kind of respond to the exact way that you responded, like, Oh actually thank you for that information, I want to learn more, so thank you. Like we're on the same team, and that's what so happens so often with these conversations when you put something out there somebody is like, no you're wrong, or whatever and you want to say, wait, by the way, it's okay, we're all human. We might be wrong or we might just have different opinions but we're not ... But usually when it comes to health and wellness like this, we're on the same team. We want to educate the public and we want everybody to be healthier. So I think when you address someone like that too, it's always funny when they're like, Oh really? You want to know what I have to say more..

Keri:

He was expecting like a fight and you were like, dude, I'm good, I want to learn. So that's the thing I think for everybody to learn from. If somebody is attacking like that, it's always good, take the high road and no, I want to learn, don't be offended by their tone. You might learn from them and you might have a good conversation or you might just have a different opinion and you can still take obviously the high road of, that's great, thank you for commenting, but I believe this and that's okay too.

Ashley Koff:

And you know, it helped me with something else and I think we encounter it and we wanted to be cute with the title today and say, OMG GMOs and that's great, but I think there's a really important point. There are two of them, which is marketing and being cute and like the Clickbait of getting, so somebody opens your headline, but if it has a risk of actually being just inflammatory or actually wrong, I'm not so down with those headlines. And I know like different magazines and different people do that as a way to get you to open something up, but I think if you're going at it from a health coach or somebody who is an expert, or even if you're not an expert and you're trying to share information of another expert, I think there's a responsibility.

Ashley Koff:

You can be cute, but you also need to be clear. Then I think the second part, and it was a really valuable one for me which is, I actually don't comment on GMOs when I don't have enough space, I.E 140 characters to really explain what I just explained to all of you. It is a 10 minute conversation. I think that's important. The lesson that I learned from this gentleman is that I try so hard and I think so many of us do because we're not the scientists or I will say, I'm not the scientist. I try to read that information and have a point of view and sometimes I'll even go back and run it by the scientist to make sure I've said it right. But I know people remember things like my marketing head, they remember analogies or get them to laugh or do certain things like that, but was a time and a place for that-

Keri:

Totally agree.

Ashley Koff:

And you do have to have your correct information, and I think that's key too.

Keri:

Yeah, I completely agree, and it's actually one of the most challenging things and I think you know this as well when doing TV, when you only have a short bit of time, so you have to get in something there but you don't have the followup. And people always say, you said this, yes, I said yes, but how

many conversations and how many times and how many emails I've said, I had to make it simple and I've had a certain amount of time. So when I technically said, I'm like, yes, there is all of this other information, but this is just the top line, and that's what news is and that's what media is. So it's very, very tough. But I agree there's certain topics, foods make you feel satisfied or something is a lot different than talking about something like GMOs. So for certain topics, when you're not given that much space or time, it makes it that much more difficult. And I completely agree. And I think that's gotta be very difficult for a lot of the topics that you've covered.

Ashley Koff:

And that's where I think the best response at any of us can offer is basically if somebody like, say somebody hits you real quickly on TV like, Oh, what do you think? Or even online, what do you think about that GMO thing? And you can say, well, you know what? I actually recommend organic wherever possible, because I'm curious and maybe a little suspicious about are GMOs healthy. The main thing that I want is I want just food grown the way that nature intended with the least of what could be irritated and annoying and the most of the nutrients. And I just leave it at that. And I'm like, and then that way if you wrapped GMOs into the conversation of sort of one of a laundry list of things that you're thinking about.

Ashley Koff:

I always, I have four pillars from nutrition. I'll talk about quality and I would say GMOs fit in there, but it's not like then I can just go to town on quantity or I don't have to think about nutrient balance or I get to like, I avoid frequency. And so I think this idea of just honing in on GMOs and making them the devil, it is such a mistake. And I think that that's a great, that's why we kind of took a fun take on it today hopefully.

Keri:

No, but I think that's really smart and I like what you said because A, you explained it really well and I think at the beginning of the conversation it actually sounded, I'm sure there's some of the people that are like wait, biotech and genetically engineered and hybrids and select breeds. It almost could sound like really confusing, but when you break it down the way you did and really just explain. So first of all, you don't have to be anti GMOs. We might find that there are some GMOs in the future that actually are beneficial. So I think even that, knowing that we're open minded and you're not anti-science, you're not anti biotech, you don't have to be anti biotech, you don't have to be just to

choose to not want GMOs in your food at the moment, and especially we just want to know if they're there because we don't know.

Keri:

We're losing a little bit of signal here, sorry. I lost you for a second, sorry. So I think that that's really important that we really, again, like we just want to know, we want to know and we do know that there are no long term. I'm also, I'm summarizing a little bit now for everybody. So there's longterm human studies and that we tend to-

Ashley Koff:

Human safety studies.

Keri:

Human safety studies, yes, sorry-

Ashley Koff:

I'm not sure they're human safety in general but safety I think is what I would say.

Keri:

Right. So at this point in time, that's one of the big reasons to avoid them, and like you said, the bigger reason there is really, again, at least we should know if we're consuming them. I also like how you spoke about glyphosate because I think that's important. I think a lot of people don't know about glyphosate and I know we've had conversations about that and I've read some on that, but that was actually really-

Ashley Koff:

And that's round up.

Keri:

Yeah.

Ashley Koff:

I should have said that that's roundup like, so if you hear roundup ready or roundup, that's what we're talking about.

Keri:

Yup. That's actually a good point too for everybody. And then again, also focusing on like what the times and places that it's more important to focus on it if you're in, if you're not in an optimal functional state, if you're within a disease state, if you're a childhood or prenatal, that's obviously a time to let's say worry about it, think about it more. And then something else that you brought up there, which is like what I talk about even if it's just in terms of like indulging in certain foods, if it's something you eat once a year, well then you know what, go enjoy it. Whether it has GMOs or there's a lot of sugar or whatever, that's not going to change anything in your health. You don't have to get crazy about that.

Keri:

On the other hand, if it's something that's in your daily life or multiple times a day or it's for your child or you are sick or something, obviously you have to take it, you have to consider that food or that item or that product very differently. So I think that's also really important for people to know. I also love how you said the organic focus on just going for organic. That's the most simple they're not in there. And that's actually a, just really the easiest thing to tell your clients if you don't want to. We don't know enough about GMOs were not labeled. So if you really want to avoid them, it's again, it's like go for organic. You know, you're playing it safe there. I think that's really important. And then like you said, the kiss. The kiss, keeping it simple and sweet. Do you say simple sweetheart. Is that what you said?

Ashley Koff:

I said sweetheart, it works in the moment.

Keri:

I liked it. But keeping it simple, but it's true but it's being realistic about it. And what I like about this also too, because I think the way you explained GMOs is the way I think I talk about a lot of other

areas of nutrition. Even though you believe so much in understanding in learning the science of it, you want this to be studied. You want foods to be labeled. You're so knowledgeable in this area, you feel passionately about this area of nutrition, organics and GMOs, however, or non GMO is I should say. You feel you feel passionate about this, but you're also like realistic and you're realistic and I think often people think that people that are fighting for labeling or something that they think that they're not being realistic and that maybe they eat at the same whatever place every single day and they're growing every bit of their food.

Keri:

You live a very realistic life and you dine out and you eat different foods and you're not it fits in. I think for some people, again, it's the way I might discuss other things in nutrition. But I think that that's also helpful for people to hear that even somebody that's so knowledgeable and passionate in this specific area of nutrition still like, we got to be realistic. We don't know everything and I think that's good-

Ashley Koff:

I have had movie popcorn, I promise you I've had movie popcorn and I know it wasn't organic and may have cocoa Mayakoba but I think-

Keri:

But you're not doing it every day is the point.

Ashley Koff:

No, you're not doing it. And the part of it is also like, we will have a label and it'll make things easier. Campbell's just came around and said they're going to label and I promise you that that's all because of them. I mean, it's a good strategic move for them. They want to do that piece, but the tide is turning. And so I think as we're not going to be, I guess bear with me to the audience here, bear with us for another maybe five to seven years. I think that this is going to be a time that we look back on and be WTF. Like why was this such a big issue?

Ashley Koff:

And a big part of it is because Monsanto pays for our elected officials. Okay. I live in D.C. I just had to get that in there. No, I'm just kidding. But it's a big issue politically and I think as that changes because of what people like us are doing and because of what we're the people who are purchasing are doing, we're going to see change happen. So it won't always be this unknown, confusion.

Keri:

Well by the way, that's what I was going to actually, that was going to be my followup and my last question to you is going to be, so now you gave us this great overview and explanation of where we're at and what's going on and what we should think about and how we can easily explain this information to our clients. So that's amazing. But then I was just going to actually ask you, you sorta just got into it a little bit just so where do you think we're at now and what do you see as the near future?

Ashley Koff:

Yeah, we're in a really dicey spot. So countries around the world are denying our exports because we have GMOs and they're saying and that flies in the face of their bands or their labels. That's a whole issue. Suddenly you see boards now being like, Hmm, I kind of want that part meeting like industry boards, right. Politically it's really strong I mean, somebody the other day was saying like, Monsanto is as strong as the NRA in terms of what their strength. I still think the NRA stronger and I don't know enough about politics, but I think-

Keri:

Okay, we got to keep that one for another conversation.

Ashley Koff:

Yeah totally but I think the interesting thing to that end is what has happened and I've been involved with almost every state labeling initiative on some level. Certainly in California I was really, really active and I actually don't believe in a state label, but I believed that the influence that I think this is what has happened is as you see more States do come closer to passing, or in the case of

Vermont actually passing the label it now the government has sat back and said, "What are we going to do? Because we can't have people trade across States like this isn't the 1700s."

Ashley Koff:

And I don't know how familiar all of you are with prop 65 in California, but when proxy 65 went in and it made it really important for you to look at your heavy metals and things like that. Now that's just become the national standard even though it's a California prop 65 because nobody's going to make a product for California and a product for the rest of. So I think long story long in terms of where we are, I think de facto because of all of these initiatives, I think we're moving in the realm of we will have a national label.

Ashley Koff:

The challenge right now is like anything in politics is that the label that now it's now almost a strategic move is that those that would like there to not be a label or looking at the national and the international level and trying to impact change there to say the label has to be, for example, voluntary for companies. Right? And it would be ... Or the companies that are non-GMO should put that on their package, like that kind of a thing. So I think where we are right now is in the negotiation of what a national label would look like. And we want that to be favorable to us, to health care providers and to the consumer as opposed to it being favorable to the food industry.

Ashley Koff:

And the best thing, the best example, if you ever want to throw it at someone or if you want to do an Instagram post or any of these things and please tag me. I love it. Is that look at a product that you like here, like from any of these companies and then look at it when you see the label, if you're in the UK or if you're over in Europe or if you happen to be in Russia and you'll see it labeled there or you'll see it missing the GMO ingredient and it's the same global company that's like based in our States, right?

Ashley Koff:

So they already are making a different product or at least a different label in our country then in the UK or any of these other places. That just shows first of all like we should not be getting right now

we're getting less good treatment from our global companies that are based here than where we're exporting to and I think that part should be changing.

Keri:

Yeah, absolutely and that's such a good point and it really, it just, it doesn't make sense. It just doesn't make any sense and there has to be this shift and like anything else and especially something as big and as impactful as this, it's going to take time and it's probably, we're going to see things that are going to be very frustrating probably over the next few years. But like you said, ultimately you do believe that it's going to change in the next five or so years, which is great.

Ashley Koff:

I think the biggest changes is coming through from companies that are just making the change because of where we are now is I think consumers have more influence on the companies than the government does. And as long as so I think that's the balance that we'll continue to see.

Keri:

Yeah. Which is great. Which is why someone like you making noise about it is so incredibly important. And why you educating everybody here is also so important so we can all make noise as well. I know my nutrition school friends here I'm sure they all learned a lot and this is incredibly valuable learning and hearing this information straight from you. So it's really, really incredible I am so thankful for your time today. I always love hearing about this from you and I can read about it and know about it and read more about it. But hearing having the conversation with you, I always learn something and it's always Oh, here we got New York city sirens sorry everybody.

Ashley Koff:

Yeah, I was like, where are they?

Keri:

Yeah. Sorry they're not coming to get me they're just outside. Anyway, always so incredibly just incredible you're so insightful and it's really amazing. So thank you again so much for your time and everybody, don't forget to check out ashleykoffrd.com and there will be information attached here

also where you can find Ashley and follow her. And yeah, and also, I'm sure probably Twitter's a great place to ask you questions, right?

Ashley Koff:

Totally yeah. And if I ever just say, take it offline, it's exactly what I explained here. Let's take it offline.

Keri:

You'll know what she means. You've got the inside scoop straight from Ashley Koff.

Ashley Koff:

Yeah, the inside scoop.

Keri:

All right thank you so much, so much love to you.

Ashley Koff:

Thank you. Bye. Ciao.

Keri:

Bye.