



KETO UNIVERSITY 2025 NASHVILLE, TN

March 31 – April 2, 2025

SPEAKER BIOS

(LISTED IN ORDER OF AGENDA)



ERIC
H. Kossoff, MD

Dr. Kossoff is a Professor of Neurology and Pediatrics at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland USA. He received his medical degree from SUNY at Buffalo School of Medicine in New York, followed by a residency in pediatrics at Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, Virginia. He completed a fellowship in child neurology and pediatric epilepsy at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. He has been at Johns Hopkins since 1998.

Dr. Kossoff is a pediatric epilepsy specialist and the Medical Director of the Pediatric Ketogenic Diet Center at Johns Hopkins. He is one of the world experts on ketogenic dietary therapy for neurologic disorders, a founding member of the International Neurologic Ketogenic Society, and is dedicated to bringing the use of diet therapies for neurologic disorders to the entire world. He is a coauthor of *The Ketogenic and Modified Atkins Diets: Treatments for Epilepsy and Other Disorders*, now in its 7th edition, and helped organize both the 2008 and 2018 expert consensus guidelines on ketogenic diet management. Dr. Kossoff is also very involved in teaching and mentorship, and is the Director of the Child Neurology Residency Program at Johns Hopkins.



ZAHAVA
Turner, RD, CSP, LDN

Zahava Turner received her Bachelor of Science, in Dietetics and Nutrition from Queens College CUNY in New York with an emphasis in clinical nutrition and worked for 2 years as a pediatric dietitian at Schneider's Children's Hospital. Currently Zahava is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology and Board Certified in pediatric nutrition working at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center in Baltimore, Maryland since 2005. Zahava specializes in using the ketogenic diet for infants and children with epilepsy and has spoken both nationally and internationally at several conferences on the ketogenic and Modified Atkins diet for epilepsy. She is a co-author of over 30 publications and the widely referenced book *Ketogenic Diets* 7th edition.



ROBYN
Blackford, RDN, LDN

Robyn has worked as the expert ketogenic dietitian at Lurie Children's in Chicago since 2005. She helped initiate, grow and lead their Ketogenic Diet Program where they currently follow over 350 patients on ketogenic therapies. This makes Lurie Children's one of the largest Keto Centers in North America. Robyn has several publications on the Ketogenic Diet, including being an author for the International Ketogenic Diet Consensus Statement, and routinely gives presentations about the diet to a variety of audiences. She has a passion for supporting and mentoring health professionals who guide patients on ketogenic therapies.



STACEY
Bessone, RD, LDN

Stacey Bessone is a clinical dietitian at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital, where she manages patients with intractable epilepsy using medical ketogenic diets. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Dietetics from Florida International University and has almost three decades of experience in pediatric nutrition, half of which in managing patients with the ketogenic diet. Stacey is also an Assistant Professor of Neurology at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. She has co-authored numerous peer-reviewed publications and has lectured extensively at national and international conferences.



MEREDITH
Johnson, MS, RDN, CSP, LD

Meredith Johnson is a board-certified specialist in pediatric nutrition, with a focus on medical ketogenic diet therapies for epilepsy. With over a decade of experience in the field, she has become a leading expert in developing effective dietary interventions for pediatric epilepsy patients. As a co-creator of an international ketogenic diet email listserv, Meredith has fostered an engaging community of over 500 dietitian subscribers, facilitating knowledge sharing and collaboration among professionals. Additionally, she co-authored the "Ketogenic Diet Therapies for Neurological Disorders Pocket Guide" in partnership with the Charlie Foundation, which is utilized by healthcare providers around the world. Since becoming a dietitian in 2013, Meredith has demonstrated a strong commitment to program and medical staff development, ensuring that best practices in pediatric nutrition are implemented to improve patient outcomes.



LINDSEY
Thompson, PhD, RD, LD

Lindsey Thompson is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition at the University of Kansas Medical Center, where she brings 15 years of clinical expertise implementing ketogenic diets for drug-resistant epilepsy. Passionate about the transformative impact of the medical ketogenic diet on patients, families, and caregivers, Lindsey strives to connect clinical practice with innovative research. Her research investigates the nutritional, cognitive and qualitative outcomes of epilepsy patients—especially infants—underscoring her commitment to advancing care in neurological disorders. A registered dietitian since 2007, she earned her doctorate from the University of Kansas Medical Center in 2019.



VANESSA
Aldaz, MPH, RDN, CDCES

Vanessa Aldaz is a registered dietitian nutritionist and certified diabetes care and education specialist with over 20 years of clinical experience in ketogenic diet therapies for epilepsy and neurological disorders. She holds an MPH in Nutrition from Loma Linda University and a B.S. in Biochemistry and Cell Biology from the University of California, San Diego. Vanessa spearheaded the ketogenic diet therapy program at Rady Children's Hospital, San Diego, where she developed key protocols and led the creation and implementation of what is now recognized as one of the foremost ketogenic diet centers in the US. Vanessa has contributed to several publications and presentations on the ketogenic diet and has served as a ketogenic diet ambassador through Nutricia North America. In her private practice, she now focuses on ketogenic diet therapies, and brain health & nutrition.



LISA
Vanatta, MS, RDN, CSP

Lisa Vanatta MS, RDN, CSP obtained her B.A from the University of Utah, completed an internship at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and her Master's degree in Human Nutrition /Nutritional Biology from the University of Chicago before moving to Phoenix, AZ. Lisa has worked at Phoenix Children's for 25 + years, 15 of those with the ketogenic program. She is currently the program coordinator. Her interests include utilizing ketogenic therapy in the pediatric ICU and NICU, ketogenic parenteral nutrition, and in infantile spasms. She co-authored [Ketogenic Diet Therapies for Neurological Disorders Pocket Guide](#), 2023, 5th Edition with support from the Charlie Foundation. When not designing ketogenic diets, she is crafting and spending time with her 4 kids and husband.



ELIZABETH
Felton, MD

Elizabeth Felton, MD, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Neurology and Biomedical Engineering at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. She specializes in epilepsy and her clinical interests include ketogenic therapy for adults, special issues affecting women, neurostimulation and pediatric to adult transitions. She is the UW Health Ketogenic Diet Program Director and Women's Epilepsy Clinic Co-Director. She established the UW Health Adult Neurology Ketogenic Diet Therapy Clinic and developed a parallel clinical research program.



KELLY
Faltersack, MS, RDN, LDN, CD

Kelly Faltersack is a registered dietitian nutritionist at a large academic medical center in Madison, Wisconsin. Kelly has been a registered dietitian nutritionist since 2011. She has five years of experience in neuro intensive care and has specialized in ketogenic diet therapy for adults with epilepsy, Glut1 deficiency, and other neurological conditions since 2016. Kelly has co-authored publications on ketogenic diet therapy, serves on the Education Committee for the International Neurological Ketogenic Society (INKS), and serves on the medical advisory board for the Glut1 Deficiency Foundation.



RACHEL
Finn

Chef Rachel Finn is a Clinical Chef/Educator at a pediatric hospital in Kansas City, specializing in medical diet therapies for 12 years. With a background in hospitality management, she collaborates with clinical providers to transform nutrition science into practical, delicious meals. She creates original recipes for patients on ketogenic and metabolic diets and leads cooking classes for patients and caregivers. Chef Rachel has presented at the American Epilepsy Society, Global Ketogenic Symposium, and National Kidney Foundation. Her research includes the impact of cooking classes on ketogenic diet families, kitchen safety for patients with seizures and learning disorders, and cost analysis of ketogenic diets. Her work ensures patients receive both the nutritional and practical support needed for successful dietary management.



SHILPA
Reddy, MD

Shilpa Reddy is an Associate Professor in the Division of Pediatric Neurology, Section Head of Pediatric Epilepsy, and Director of the Pediatric Epilepsy Monitoring Unit at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, TN. As part of her leadership role in epilepsy, she built and has grown the multidisciplinary ketogenic diet program at Vanderbilt since 2019. In addition, she is an educational leader as the Program Director of the Epilepsy fellowship and Associate Program Director of the Clinical Neurophysiology fellowship.

She attended medical school at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine before moving to Nashville in 2010, where she completed her Pediatrics residency, Pediatric Neurology residency, and Clinical Neurophysiology fellowship at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. She joined faculty at VUMC as a board-certified pediatric epileptologist in 2016. To continue exploring systematic and evidence-based solutions to health care delivery, specifically in the realm of clinical epilepsy, Dr. Reddy earned a Master of Management of Health Care degree through Vanderbilt University's Owen Graduate School of Management in 2022.



KRISTEN
Matthews, RD, LDN, CSP

Kristen Matthews has been the ketogenic dietitian at Monroe Carrel Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt since 2021. Originally from NJ, Kristen moved to Nashville in 2019 and completed her internship at Vanderbilt University Medical Center where she would begin her career soon after as ketogenic RD. Now she manages ~65 classic keto patients and an additional 25+ Modified Atkins/modified keto diet patients from all over Tennessee. She has always had an affinity toward working with children and is honored to be able to serve families and create long lasting relationships with them as they entrust her with their child's care. Seeing how the ketogenic diet can make such a difference for these children is what drives her passion to do this work.



LILA
Worden, MD

Dr. Worden is a pediatric neurologist and epileptologist at Connecticut Children's hospital in Hartford, where she leads the ketogenic diet program which serves both children and adults in the Northeast. She got bit by the keto bug initially while in medical school at Johns Hopkins working with Dr. Kossoff and subsequently had the pleasure of continuing her keto education with other greats in the field throughout residency and fellowship, including Dr. Thiele at Massachusetts General Hospital and Dr. Berqvist at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. She landed back in her home state of Connecticut where she lives with her husband and 2 children.