

NEW YORK POST

OPRAH PREPS DR. OZ

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April 9, 2008 -- OPRAH Winfrey is developing a talk show for **Dr. Mehmet Oz** to debut late next year, according to a report in today's Broadcasting & Cable magazine.

Oprah has been grooming Oz in the same way she prepped Dr. Phil McGraw for his own show in 2002 - with frequent, weekly appearances on his top-rated talk show.

Oz, the vice-chair and professor of surgery at Columbia University and director of the Cardiovascular Institute at New York Presbyterian Hospital, usually appears in his surgical greens to answer health questions from the audience.

Oprah and execs from her production company, Harpo, started meeting with potential distributors last month in Chicago, according to the authoritative trade magazine.

While the show will obviously be about health, there is no word on the proposed format.

Lately, Oprah has been putting a lot of emphasis on spinning off new TV shows from her afternoon talk show.

She is behind Rachel Ray's new show, which began in 2006, and earlier this month signed Kirstie Alley to a development deal for a possible talk show of her own.

"The Big Give," a reality-competition show on Sunday night on ABC that she also produces, has been a ratings hit.

And starting next year, Harpo and Discovery will launch OWN: The Oprah Winfrey Network, which she will program.