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by Vivien Santana Hughes

Lisa Masterson, M.D.: The Doctor is In ... Santa Monica, Africa and on a TV Near You

Lisa Masterson, M.D., of *The Doctors* believes strongly in preventive medicine. Best weight loss tip? Alas: "There's no quick fix: It's always diet and exercise."



You may recognize Dr. Lisa Masterson from the medical talk show *The Doctors*. But, in fact, she almost never made it on the Emmy-nominated series. "I was so involved with my charity, Maternal Fetal Care International, that I almost didn't do the show," says Masterson. "Then one of my friends pointed out, 'If you get this, you're going to have this huge platform to give medical information to the whole world.' I'm so grateful for that advice!"

Watching *The Doctors* is a bit like eavesdropping on a group of physicians in a hospital cafeteria (minus the relationship drama). Teamed with an emergency room physician, a pediatrician and a plastic surgeon, Masterson, an OB/GYN, talks shop, but in a relatable way. "We're really just talking to each other about the topics. And whether we agree or disagree – you'll hear our opinions."

In addition to the many hats Masterson wears career-wise, she and her husband are parents of Daniel, 19, who's starting his sophomore year at college. "He's always been a big supporter of my career," she says, "even when I was teaching 'sex ed' at his elementary school!"

What's in store for Season 3 of *The Doctors*?

The first year was fabulous and exhausting – like being a new parent. I have a new respect for actors. This year, we're going up a notch with innovative ideas. It's all about being able to empower people. It's a collaboration of knowledge: we're all practicing physicians and share our patients' concerns, we work with fantastic producers who know what viewers want to see, then we bring it to TV. To connect with our viewers even more, we have a "Produce *The Doctors*" website where you can submit your ideas and vote on others: <http://www.thedoctorstv.com/produce/home>.

Why did you start Maternal Fetal Care International?

Knowing that mothers were dying – one every minute – from things that were com-

pletely solvable. It's a lack of resources. For example, in Eretria, Africa, there are six OB/GYNs for the entire country [population of approximately 5 million]. First, we started bringing in medical supplies and doctors, and then worked with the government to develop their own OB/GYN residency programs. Last December, we set up a clinic in Sierra Leone – the most devastated place I've seen other than the disaster in Haiti. It's not rocket science – in every single place, it's completely doable. You have to find out where the problem is, address it and get your hands dirty.

How did you balance parenting with the demands of being an OB/GYN?

If my husband was out of town and I got a call in the middle of the night, Daniel would go with me to the hospital. He knew all the doctor's call rooms in all the different hospitals. I took him to Africa with my charity work. The balancing act is fun – you realize that when your kid goes away. That's life as a parent. You need to enjoy the whole, hectic mish-mash. Involve your kids in your life so they know who you really are.

With all you have going on, you found time to open Ocean Oasis Medical Spa. Or was it because of all you have going on?

The spa was always part of my private practice. I had a vision of women thinking about healthcare in a holistic manner. Prevention is the key to everything.

See *The Doctors* on KCAL 9, Mon.-Fri. at 11 a.m. Season 3 premieres Sept. 13.

To find out more about Maternal Fetal Care International, visit: <http://www.mfci.net>. ♦

Chat Room columnist Vivien Santana Hughes is a former *L.A. Parent* editor and the mother of three – two sons in college and (surprise!) a five-year-old daughter. She lives with her patient husband in La Cañada-Flintridge.