

Helping a First Time Mom Prepare for Motherhood

When Rachel* learned she was pregnant, she didn't know what to expect. Like many first-time moms, she wanted to have a safe, healthy pregnancy and save enough money to buy everything that her daughter would need. With a chronic medical condition and low income, Rachel was worried about her pregnancy. But her nurse, Jasmine, who is part of the national Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program, was by her side.



Rachel's pregnancy came as a surprise that she didn't feel prepared. "To know that I would be going on that journey ... it was definitely nerve-racking," Rachel recalls. "I was open to getting all the help I could."

That help would come from working with Jasmine, a registered

nurse with the NFP program at VNS Health. Jasmine stayed by Rachel's side throughout her pregnancy and after she gave birth to baby Noelle*. From connecting her with community resources to supporting her during complications to getting her the care she needed for postpartum depression, Jasmine helped to set Rachel up for success as a new mother to Noelle.

Supporting Rachel During Her Pregnancy

For a soon-to-be new mom, it's normal to feel overwhelmed. You're going to feel overwhelmed and that's okay. We want to help our families, our moms, set up a good foundation.

– Jasmine, registered nurse, NFP

The NFP program pairs expecting first-time moms with nurses for support during their pregnancy and over the first 2 years of their child's life. Rachel was paired with Jasmine, who immediately began helping Rachel overcome her worries about pregnancy and motherhood.

One of Rachel's worries was about managing her chronic asthma. If it isn't managed properly, asthma can increase the risk of complications. Jasmine made sure that Rachel understood how asthma could affect her pregnancy and how important it was to take her medications as prescribed so she could keep her condition under control.

Rachel also developed cholestasis, which is a condition that affects liver function in some pregnant women. It can cause complications for both the woman and her child and can cause intense itching.

Jasmine taught Rachel all about cholestasis, including how to control the itching and the importance of keeping her appointments with her prenatal provider so they could monitor her and her growing baby's health.

Connecting Rachel with Resources for Her Child

Throughout her time supporting Rachel, Jasmine connected her with other support systems. Before Noelle's birth, they received supplies like diapers, a car seat, and a stroller.

Jasmine also helped set Rachel up with food stamps. And because finding affordable housing was a challenge, she referred Rachel to housing resources like the BronxWorks Home Base program, which gives housing vouchers to people who have certain economic restrictions.

After Noelle was born, Rachel received a high chair and a playpen so that Inara had somewhere safe to play.

Recognizing and Getting Care for Postpartum Depression

When Rachel came home with baby Noelle, Jasmine was ready to help her adjust to motherhood.

Rachel experienced mood swings and sadness after giving birth, just like many other new mothers. But she soon began to suspect that it might be more than just feeling down.

Jasmine noticed signs that Rachel might be experiencing something more serious. "Rachel was stating how this was affecting her mood," Jasmine says. "She didn't feel like doing much and she was having difficulties with her relationship. And, just not feeling like she was doing her best as a new mom."

Although Rachel wasn't sure exactly what was happening or what to call it, Jasmine suspected Rachel was going through a serious form of depression. An assessment confirmed she had postpartum depression. Jasmine helped Rachel develop an action plan to treat her condition and set her up with a therapist within just 24 hours.

Therapy was invaluable for Rachel, and Jasmine started to notice positive changes. "Rachel had a brighter outlook on where things were going in her life after starting therapy. She was a lot more open and willing to discuss what she was going through mentally and emotionally."

Our NFP Program

I think that moms believe that NFP is a program where we're going to come in and just give them little tips, and then that's it. But we are there for our moms to support them no matter what. If it's physical, if it's mental – whatever goal that they have. It surprises them that they have a nurse in their corner who doesn't just do health care, but who makes sure that all of their needs are being taken care of in a holistic way.

– Jasmine, registered nurse, NFP

The NFP program provides free at-home services to parents and children who live in Nassau County or the Bronx. Families are eligible for the program if they meet certain income requirements, are going to be first-time parents, and are in the first or second trimester of pregnancy.

NFP services include many types of support, such as:

- Educating women about pregnancy, giving birth, and child development
- Monitoring the mother's and baby's health
- Helping parents understand feeding, bathing, safe sleep practices, and other basics of caring for a baby
- Showing how to interact with the baby so that they can

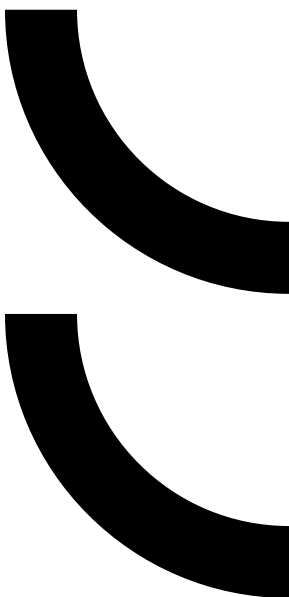
grow and develop safely

- Assisting with personal goals, like finding a job or continuing their education
- Connecting parents with resources like health insurance, medical and mental health care, doula services, childcare, and libraries

After completing the NFP program, families can join the Nurse-Family Partnership Alumni Alliance. This group connects families who have participated in the NFP program, allows them to keep learning from child development experts, and provides information about making decisions for a child's education.

If you are interested in receiving services from our NFP program, visit our NFP page to learn more.

Nurse-Family Partnership



Rachel Gains Confidence as a First-Time Mother

Through Jasmine, Rachel has become an informed and empowered mother to Noelle.

I feel like more of a confident mom. You need a lot of support during that time period in your life. Not only is having someone with you at every step of the way helpful, but it also helps having another person research stuff with you or to hear you out.

– Rachel, NFP program participant

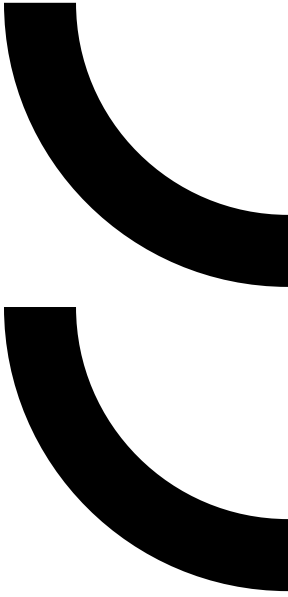
Jasmine has seen Rachel grow as a mother. Although Rachel was always attentive and caring, she is now more organized and proactive about finding resources for herself and Noelle.

“Rachel is very open to discussing new ideas, learning new things,” says Jasmine. “Anything that will help her succeed at being a first-time mom.”

*Patient and family names have been changed to protect privacy.

Your donation can help people like Rachel as they learn about motherhood through the NFP program.

Donate Today



For more information about giving, contact our Development team at [1-212-609-1525](tel:1-212-609-1525) or development@vnshealth.org.