FILIPINO CULTURE

All information below is the result of interviews with various Filipino mothers. The content below is only the experience of the Filipino mothers that were interviewed & may not apply to others from this culture.

PRENATAL

- Women went to see the Hilot (midwife) for prenatal care.
- Husbands are not involved in prenatal care; it is thought of as women's responsibility.
- It is said that if a woman has a lot of blemishes/pimples on her face, the baby will be a girl.
- If the mother glows and radiates beauty, the baby will be a boy.
- When holding a ring on a chain above the woman's stomach, if the ring swings side-to-side baby will be a boy, if the ring swings in a circle, the baby will be a girl.
- If a mother is craving sweets and other carbohydrates, the baby will be a girl.
- If a mother is craving oily or fried foods, the baby will be a boy.
- The mother cannot eat anything slimy or it may cause her to have a miscarriage.
- The mother should eat fish (bangus) to make her child smart.
- The mother should not eat mango to avoid having a hairy baby.
- If the mother is angry with a certain person, the baby will look like that person.
- The mother wears a crucifix on her chest to protect her and the baby from evil spirits.
- The mother cannot drive a car with a standard shift or it may cause the umbilical cord to wrap around the baby's neck.
• A pregnant woman is considered to be a good luck charm; take her with you to receive good luck!
• Women should wear long sleeves and long pants to help protect baby from the cold.
• Women cannot attend a funeral because the spirit might possess the baby.
• Women should keep busy with house chores. A lazy mother will make a lazy child.

LABOR AND DELIVERY

• When delivery is near, boil a certain fruit seed. This act will help facilitate the birthing process for the laboring woman.
• Pain medicine was not used in the past because it was thought to harm the baby. Today, some women try to uphold this tradition for the same reason.
• Other therapeutic measures such as massages were used to alleviate pain.
• The Hilot places the placenta into a ceramic pot and plants it into the ground, so the baby will become brave.
• If a mother has a miscarriage, the fetus and placenta is planted in the ground, so the baby's spirit is put to rest.
• If baby is delivered at home, the Hilot will be the one to cut the umbilical cord.
• The father of the baby is not present during delivery.
To help close the uterus after vaginal birth, a warming ritual is performed. A warm object is placed under the sheets with the woman. The woman is told to stay in bed. The linens act as insulators to maintain heat.

After the warming ritual, guava leaves are boiled in water. This water is used to cleanse the woman.

With the exception of the guava bath, women are not allowed to shower for 1 week after birth.

Mothers should not shower with cold water to prevent varicose veins.

Bed rest beliefs vary from 10 to 30 days or longer.

Family members take care of baby as mother is resting in bed.

During bed rest, the head of the bed is elevated to help drain the blood. If the blood goes up, it is believed to affect the brain.

The Hilot massages the mother's body with a certain oil for 12 days after birth to strengthen the muscles.

Due to the widening of the hips after birth, a woman should bind her hips together with a strip of cloth; this aids in narrowing the hips.

Sabao (soup) made of chicken and marungay leaves was given to the mother to help clean out her system from the "dirty" blood.

Soup was eaten three times a day to help with breast milk production and to fortify the milk with nutrients for the baby.

Eating bananas is prohibited for the mother; it is believed to upset the baby's stomach.

Mothers should not eat taro during or after the birth of the baby to prevent itching of the body.

Mother and baby should stay at home for 3 months to prevent them from getting sick.
• If baby is complimented by strangers, mother must say, "Puera usog" (no hex) or "God bless my child" to prevent the baby from getting sick. This could be a jealous person, or an evil spirit cursing the baby.

• Make sure the baby's head is covered whenever going outside of the house until baby is one month old; this is to prevent baby from getting sick.