



# 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.*



## POST PARTUM

- *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.*