The traditional Filipino health practices come from various cultural groups. For example, Native Hawaiian, Japanese, Spanish, and Europeans. There are many medicinal practices of healing, for example, the use of *Halaman* (Herbs) and *Herbolaryo* (Witch-Doctors). There are also many childbirth superstitions among the Filipino culture.

### *Halaman* (Medicinal Herbs & Plants)

* **Subusob** leaves are used to treat complications dealing with the reproductive system.

* **Kutsay** (Chives) are cuts, bumps, scrapes, and bruises.

* **Laya** (Ginger) is used for treating sprained extremities. It is chopped and applied to areas where extremities are sprained.

* **Bawang** (Garlic) is used to treat toothaches and hypertension by chewing a single clove three times a day.

* **Saba** (Green Bananas) are used to treat fevers. It is cut into very thin slices, then applied on forehead until banana becomes brown.

### *Herbolaryo* (Witch Doctors)

It is believed that some illnesses are caused by evil spirits that enter the body which are cast by "*Manga ga mud.*" They casts these spells on people if they are jealous or disliked. They take personal items such as, clothing, a brush (to obtain a piece of hair), pictures, jewelry, etc. It is also done by food poisoning.

To be cured, these people that are cast seek help from the *herbolaryo* (Witch-Doctors).

**To heal the sickness caused by the "Manga ga mud"**

The *herbolaryo* may treat "*Manga ga mud*" by gathering unmarried individuals, and a bag of rice.

The treatment involves a night of ritual sprinkling of rice, dining and dancing to Filipino music. After the night of festivities, everyone will say a Filipino prayer for the person who has been cursed. This concludes this treatment and should remove the curse from the affected person.
Childbirth Superstitions

Filipinos have for many years been accustomed to many childbirth superstitions. These superstitions may vary from region, religion, and one's inner aspect of such beliefs.

During Pregnancy

The pregnant woman cannot: Reason(s):

Sit on a staircase or near a doorway. Prevents a c-section delivery.

Wear necklace. Prevents umbilical cord from entangling around fetus's neck.

Cut her hair. Baby will be born hairless.

It is believed that a woman with a high and pointed stomach carries a boy. Whereas, a low and rounded stomach determines a girl.

When the facial features change of a pregnant woman, it is believed she is carrying a boy. If her features remain the same, it is believed to be a girl.

Folk Health Beliefs of the Filipinos

When pregnant, do not sit with your legs far apart, it prolongs labor

When pregnant, do not use a necklace, because the baby might have the umbilical cord wrapped around its' neck.

Sleeping with your hair damp causes blindness.

Cutting nails at night creates hang nails.

Pulling out a single white hair will create 10 more white hairs.

Eating raw foods before puberty will stunt growth.

Walking bare-footed increases the risk of developing varicose veins.

References


Hart D.V., Southeast Asian Birth Customs


Ref.: [http://www.hawcc.hawaii.edu/nursing/tradfil2.htm](http://www.hawcc.hawaii.edu/nursing/tradfil2.htm)