Cambodian Culture - At a Glance
Common cultural norms, values, and traits of the Cambodian population -
also referred to as Kampuchean or Khmer.

Traditional Beliefs on Health and Medicine
- Traditional Khmer attribute illness to natural or supernatural powers.
- Illness may be considered punishment for sins committed in a past life.
- Many believe evil spirits or ancestors cause mental illness.
- Khmer may seek traditional practices before they seek Western medicine, and often hold traditional healing ceremonies in the home.

Familial Structure
- Khmer often raise large families with extended family members living together or nearby.
- Men are generally recognized as head of the family with women expected to be caregivers.
- Elders are important in decision-making and often take care of their grandchildren.

Gender
- There is some flexibility in gender roles. Most tasks performed by men are occasionally preformed by women, and vice versa.
- Women are traditionally responsible for a family’s money and they engage in small-scale marketing.
- Women often work outside the home.

Religion
- Most Cambodians are Theravada Buddhists.
- Other Cambodians practice Islam, Cham, Christianity, or animist religions.

Personal Space & Social Gestures
- Sompeah is a gesture of greeting with both palms brought together with fingers pointed upward. The higher the sompeah, the higher the status of the person being greeted.
- It is not polite to make eye contact with elders or superiors.

Communication Styles
- Khmer are generally respectful, polite, and speak softly, communicating carefully and indirectly.
- The spokesperson for the family may be the father, or the eldest son or daughter.

About ECHO
The mission of ECHO is to leverage partnerships to deliver vital health, safety, emergency and civic engagement information to help the ever-changing, diverse population integrate and become successful in our communities.

The above information was provided by Stratis health and http://www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/Cambodia.html
This information sheet is not intended to be an exhaustive approach or complete representation of the Khmer culture, but rather a basic introduction and foundation.