

Fist bumps more hygienic than handshakes

30th July, 2014



A new(ish) and alternative form of greeting and showing respect has been found to be more hygienic than shaking hands. We have all seen it on TV. Basketball and

baseball players do it after a teammate scores. Rock stars and actors do it onstage at awards ceremonies. Even U.S. President Barack Obama does it. What is it? Well, it's fist bumping. It's kind of like a high five, except the hand is clenched into a ball and the other person's fist is given a gentle nudge, knuckles to knuckles. Researchers at the University of Aberystwyth in Wales have discovered that this twenty-first-century greeting spreads one-twentieth of the germs than a traditional handshake does and around one-tenth of the germs in a high five.

An article on Wikipedia explains that the fist bump originated with American motorcycle gangs in the 1940s. It was easier and safer to fist bump another rider than to shake hands when two bikes were side by side at traffic lights. It achieved global exposure 70 years later when in 2008, President Obama and his wife Michelle fist bumped during a televised presidential campaign speech. There is less skin-to-skin contact during a fist bump so the chance of spreading germs is lower. A researcher said: "People rarely think about the health implications of shaking hands, but if the general public could be encouraged to fist bump, there is a genuine potential to reduce the spread of infectious diseases."

Sources: Daily Mail / The Australian / Wikipedia

Writing

We should all bow instead of shake hands to avoid the spread of germs. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

alternative / showing respect / hygienic / awards ceremonies / knuckles / high five / motorcycle gangs / traffic lights / global exposure / campaign / spreading germs

True / False

- Fist bumps are used as a greeting and a show of respect. T / F
- Barack Obama fist bumps. T / F
- The article says fist bumping is for people who don't like high fives. T / F
- There are 20 times fewer germs from a fist bump than a handshake. T / F
- Fist bumps first started with hippies in the late 1960s. T / F
- Barack Obama fist bumped his wife live on TV in 2008. T / F
- There is more skin contact in a fist bump than with a handshake. T / F
- A researcher said fist bumps could increase infectious diseases. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. alternative | a. prod |
| 2. respect | b. began |
| 3. clenched | c. conventional |
| 4. nudge | d. admiration |
| 5. traditional | e. persuaded |
| 6. originated | f. closed tightly |
| 7. achieved | g. transmittable |
| 8. implications | h. different |
| 9. encouraged | i. consequences |
| 10. infectious | j. acquired |

Discussion – Student A

- How did fist bumping become better known around the world?
- Do you have to be young to fist bump?
- What do you think of the fact that Barack Obama fist bumps?
- Should hospitals and schools encourage more fist bumping?
- Do you worry about germs when shaking hands?
- Is fist bumping more of a men's or women's thing?
- What do you do every day to stop germs spreading?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. alternative form of greeting and | a. motorcycle gangs |
| 2. do it after a | b. into a ball |
| 3. the hand is clenched | c. of the germs |
| 4. one-twentieth | d. implications |
| 5. Around one-tenth of the germs | e. side at traffic lights |
| 6. originated with American | f. showing respect |
| 7. two bikes were side by | g. campaign speech |
| 8. a televised presidential | h. diseases |
| 9. People rarely think about the health | i. in a high five |
| 10. reduce the spread of infectious | j. teammate scores |

Discussion – Student B

- How important is a handshake in your culture?
- What are the best forms of greeting that you know of?
- What do you think of the high five?
- What do you think of fist bumping?
- Will you now fist bump to lower the risk of spreading germs?
- Do you think fist bumping is cool?
- Is bowing the best way of greeting without spreading germs?
- Do you have to be young to fist bump?

Spelling

- ttvelaniare form of greeting
- at awards neireceoms
- neclehdc into a fist
- knuckles to knlceuks
- spreads one-itewnteh of the germs
- a tilitdnaaro handshake
- idgtnaioer with American motorcycle gangs
- It achieved global xrepeosu
- presidential cgnpimaa speech
- the chance of ipegrasnd germs
- health pticsliainmo
- eoifntusci diseases

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. f	4. a	5. c
6. b	7. j	8. i	9. e	10. g

Role Play

Role A – Handshakes

You think handshakes are the best way to greet someone. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least desirable of these (and why): fist bumps, cheek kissing or bowing.

Role B – Fist bumps

You think fist bumps are the best way to greet someone. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least desirable of these (and why): handshakes, cheek kissing or bowing.

Role C – Cheek kissing

You think cheek kissing is the best way to greet someone. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least desirable of these (and why): fist bumps, handshakes or bowing.

Role D – Bowing

You think bowing is the best way to greet someone. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least desirable of these (and why): fist bumps, cheek kissing or handshakes.

Speaking – Unhygienic

Rank these with your partner. Put the most unhygienic at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| • chopping boards | • hand shakes |
| • restaurant menus | • computer keyboards |
| • toilet seats | • door handles |
| • pets | • the handle of a fridge |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.