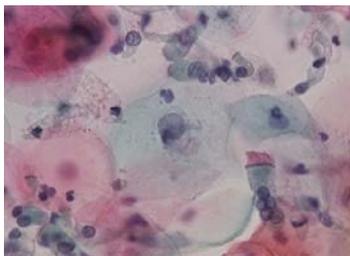




Cultural Phenomena

Spitting(16)

14:30 minutes



00:00 In Switzerland, spitting is considered revolting, a fact the duo Joko experienced in 1998 at Paradeplatz in Zürich, where the two women spat at each other for an hour. This artistic performance caused strong reactions. Spitting provokes.

02:45 Yet in sports, for example, two types of spitting can be distinguished: the sportsman who spits on the playing field or before he goes onto it in order to get rid of whatever might stop him giving his best; and the other type who shows his irritation or anger and often expresses deep contempt by spitting at his opponent.



04:15 In the cytology department of the University Clinic in Zürich, saliva is part of everyday business. Here, doctors are examining saliva, technically known as sputum, for traces of disease. Their primary goal is to recognise cancer in its early stages. In the saliva, we transport cells coming from our lungs and the oral cavity to the outside. If there are a lot of pathogenic cells in it, the saliva becomes discoloured.



07:55 Spitting saliva instead of swallowing it can be dangerous, especially when there are pathogenic bacteria or viruses in it. Other persons can be infected by tiny particles of saliva, which is the reason why spitting on the floor in trains and trams had to be forbidden at the beginning of the twentieth century.



10:45 Archerfish do not apply these norms. They spit. For a good reason: Spitting is the only way of getting their food.

11:39 Different countries, different customs. In China, people still spit regularly and forcefully, even today. The throat must be free of saliva, because it is seen as a hiding place for decay. The Japanese have a completely different attitude towards spitting than the Chinese. They frown upon it, as it is the case in Singapore. Spitting on the ground there can cost you a lot – a fine of up to a thousand dollars if you are caught.



12:38 If a man in a high position loses his control and acts unacceptably, he is punished. Generally speaking, we see spitting as a social transgression.