

Life Cycle of a Mosquito

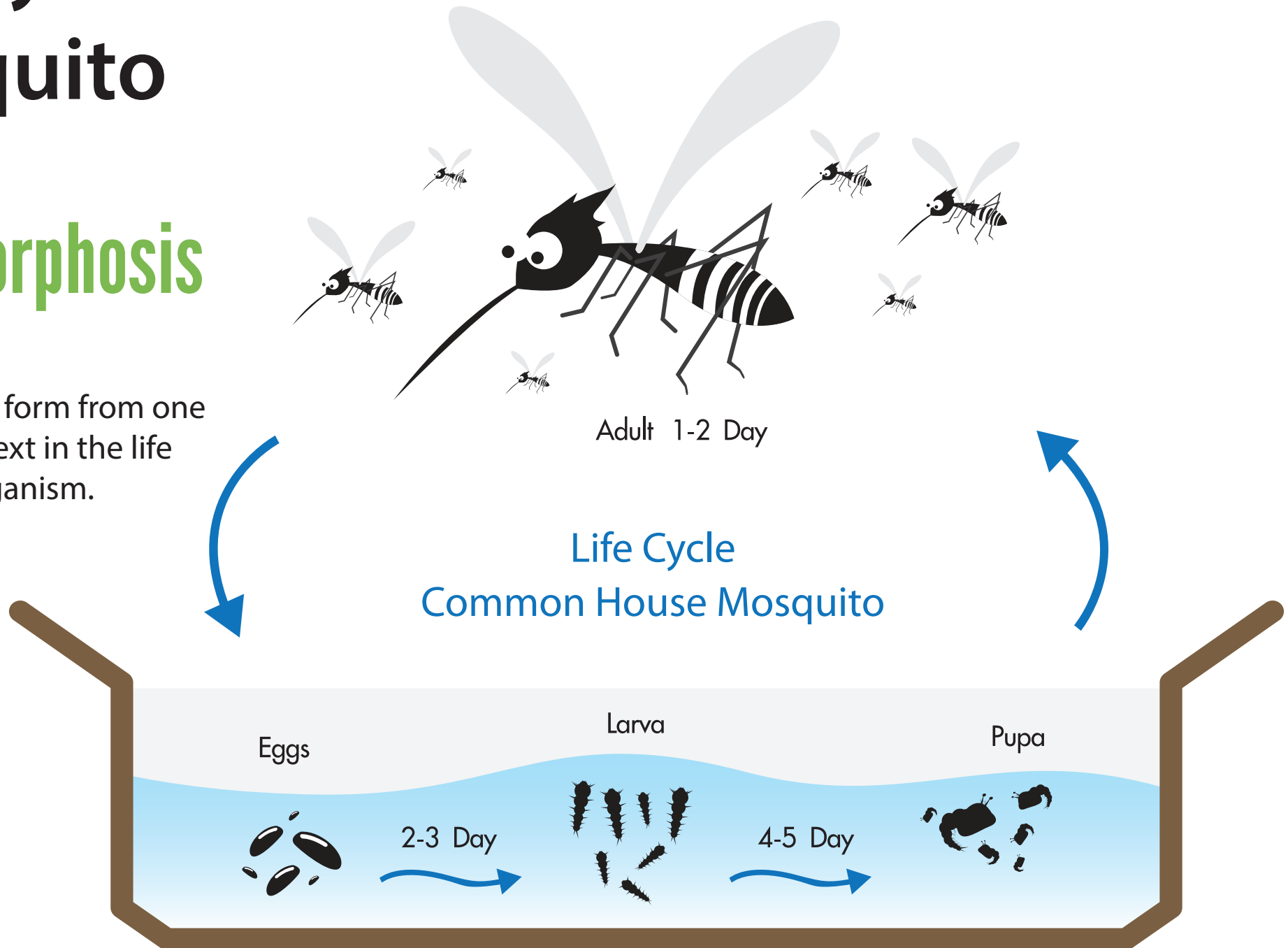


Study*ladder*

Life Cycle of a Mosquito

Metamorphosis

Definition:
The change in form from one stage to the next in the life cycle of an organism.





Some species of mosquitoes lay eggs in a clump that floats on the surface of the water, like a raft.

Did you know that mosquitoes start their life in the water?

Adult mosquitoes lay their eggs in or near water. Any place that fills with water can be a place for mosquitoes to lay their eggs. The eggs of some species can clump together on the water's surface like a raft. After a few days the eggs will hatch.

Mosquitoes in the larva stage are often referred to as 'wigglers' because they wriggle to move themselves about in the water. They use a siphon tube at the end of their abdomen to breathe air, like a snorkel. This is why you will often see them hanging upside down at the surface of the water.

Mosquito larvae feed constantly, eating microorganisms, algae and fungi. They grow rapidly, molting multiple times as they get bigger.

Finally, the larva stops eating and enters the pupae stage. Pupae are sometimes called 'tumblers' as they tumble as they float near the surface of the water. While they are cocooned in their skin, metamorphosis occurs, and their bodies change into their adult form.





The larva and pupa stages of a mosquito's life are spent just under the surface of the water.

Did you know that only female mosquitoes bite?



When an adult mosquito emerges from its pupal casing it sits on the water's surface while its body and wings dry and harden. Then it flies away to look for nectar, plant sap or honeydew (a sticky substance excreted by aphids) to feed on.

Both male and female mosquitoes feed on plant nectar, sap and honeydew. However, the females of most species of mosquitoes need protein and iron to produce eggs so they also feed on the blood of animals.

Mosquitoes have a feeding tube, called a proboscis that they use to suck up liquid food. Only females have a proboscis sharp enough to pierce the skin of animals and draw blood.

When the proboscis enters the skin a small amount of the mosquito's saliva is injected before the mosquito draws blood. The saliva contains enzymes that act as a mild painkiller to stop the host noticing what is going on. It also contains enzymes that thin out the blood at the site to allow it to flow freely. The lump you get after a mosquito 'bite' is the body's allergic reaction to the mosquito's saliva!



Mosquitoes can pick up parasites and viruses from one host and pass them on to the next host they feed from.

Diseases such as Malaria and viruses like Zika Virus are spread from person to person via mosquitoes.

This is why it is important to protect yourself against mosquito bites.

**1)
Cover
up your
skin**



**2)
Use
Insect
repellent**



**3)
Remove
excess
water**

