

## Mosquitoes

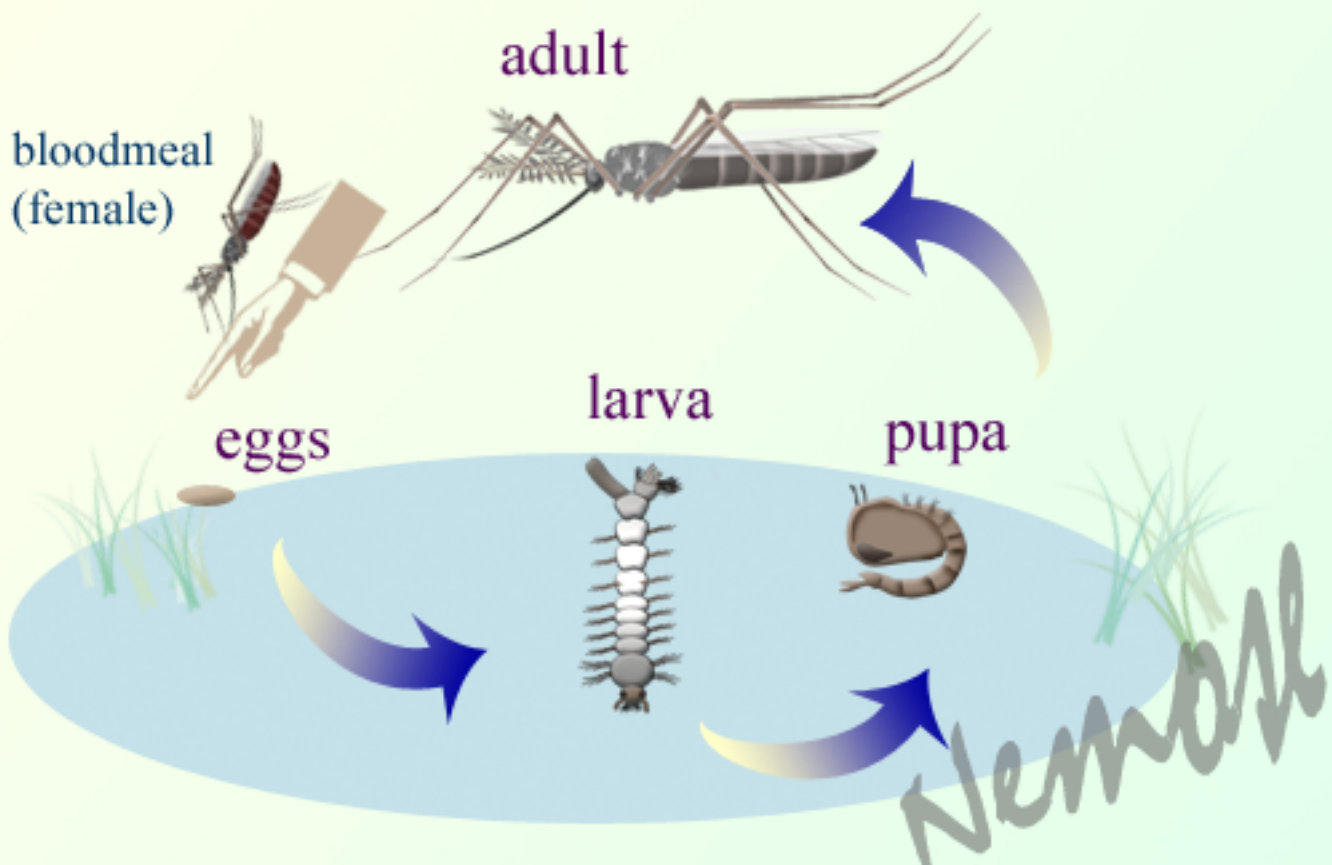
- *Anopheles gambiae*, malaria
- *Aedes aegypti*, yellow fever
- *Culex pipiens*, house mosquito
- Mosquito anatomy
- References

### Brief facts

- The word "mosquito" comes from the Spanish or Portuguese meaning "little fly" (*mosca* - fly; *-ito* - one of most common diminutive suffixes in Spanish). Indeed, mosquitoes are *Diptera* - the earliest "true" flies.
- The oldest known mosquito fossil, preserved in Canadian amber, dates 76-79 million years ago. Because of its very close resemblance to modern mosquitoes, some researchers estimate emergence of mosquitoes as early as 160 to 205 million years ago.
- Some most fierce and relentless mosquitoes live in Arctic tundra. They operate only for several weeks of the year but, apparently, are able to bring considerable grief: dead caribou have been found literally sucked dry by swarms of hungry mosquitoes.
- Among blood-sucking insects two feeding procedures are found: first when the insect inserts the tip of proboscis with some precision into a blood vessel of the host (vessel feeders or **solenophages**), and those when it cuts and stabs in a suitable place and feeds on the extravasated blood (pool feeders or **telmophages**). Mosquitoes belong to the former group. If the mosquito did not prick the vessel on the first try, she will withdraw its proboscis just a little and will probe around through the same hole until she found one.

- All mosquitoes share two common traits: only females are blood-feeding in order to lay eggs, and their larvae must develop in the water.
- Feeding habits vary widely. For example, infamous New Jersey mosquito *Ochlerotatus sollicitans* attacks by spiraling down on its victims directly from above, biting the head or upper body. Many mosquitoes will target their targets for considerable distances. Some mosquitoes buzz loudly and bite painfully, others are stealthily quiet, practically weightless and are great anesthesiologists. The list of variations can continue on and on.

# Mosquito life cycle



## References

### PubMed articles

- Budiansky S. Creatures of our own making. *Science*. 2002 Oct 4;298 (5591):80-6. **PMID: 12364775**

- Major subject **Mosquito control** **Free full text articles**

## Websites

- Health information for specific destinations, outbreak alerts, precautions, vaccination requirements. Includes mosquito-borne diseases
  - Mosquito-Borne Diseases
  - Walter Reed Biosystematics Unit
  - Animal Diversity Web: *Anopheles gambiae*
  - *Aedes aegypti* Biology
  - *Aedes aegypti* and Dengue fever by Roland Mortimer, Rio de Janeiro
  - *Culex pipiens* Linnaeus
  - A CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR NORTHEASTERN MOSQUITO LIFE CYCLES
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