

# Stage 4: Butterfly



The chrysalis cracks open and an adult butterfly emerges! At first its wings are wet and crumpled - it must hang and wait for them to dry before it can fly.

Adult butterflies drink nectar from flowers using a long tongue called a proboscis (say: pro-BOS-is).

- Wings must dry before first flight
- Drinks nectar through a long curled tongue
- Helps pollinate flowers
- Will lay eggs to start the cycle again!

### FUN FACT!

Butterflies taste with their feet! Special sensors on their legs tell them if something is good to eat before they even take a sip.

## Label the Cycle!

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Observe a Butterfly

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

[thecrazyoutdoormama.com](http://thecrazyoutdoormama.com)



# Butterfly Life Cycle

An overview of a butterfly's life by

---



## Stage 1: Egg



A butterfly starts life as a tiny egg laid on a leaf! The mother butterfly carefully chooses the **right plant** - one that the caterpillar will be able to eat when it hatches.

Eggs can be round, oval, or ribbed and are often **tinier than a pinhead!** They hatch in just **3-7 days**.

- Laid on the underside of leaves
- Each species prefers different plants
- Monarch butterflies only lay eggs on milkweed!
- Covered in a sticky coating to stay put

### **FUN FACT!**

A monarch butterfly can lay up to 700 eggs in her lifetime - but only a few survive to become adults!

## Stage 2: Caterpillar



When the egg hatches, out comes a tiny **caterpillar** (also called a larva). Its one and only job right now? **EAT!**

Caterpillars munch leaves almost non-stop, growing so fast they shed their skin (called molting) up to 5 times! Some caterpillars grow 100 times their hatching size.

- Hatches hungry and starts eating immediately
- Sheds its skin as it grows bigger
- Stores energy for the chrysalis stage
- Each species looks completely different

### **FUN FACT!**

A caterpillar's job is just to eat and grow. In 2 weeks it can grow to be 100 times bigger than when it hatched!

## Stage 3: Chrysalis



Now the caterpillar does something incredible - it forms a **chrysalis** (say: KRIS-ah-lis), a hard protective shell.

Inside, the caterpillar's body completely melts and rebuilds itself into a butterfly. This takes about **10-14 days**.

- Hangs from a branch or leaf
- Outer shell hardens to protect it
- Body rebuilds completely inside
- Often turns transparent near the end!

### **FUN FACT!**

Inside the chrysalis, almost everything dissolves into a liquid "soup" before rebuilding as a butterfly!