

Butterfly Metamorphosis

Four stages of the life cycle

The butterfly and moth life cycles includes four stages (egg, larva, pupa, and adult).

Female butterflies typically deposit their eggs on the undersides of the leaves of larval (host) plants. For the Monarch butterfly below the (host) plant is milkweed. So once the eggs hatch the caterpillars have food to sustain themselves through the main eating and growth stage. The caterpillars will eat until they grow too big for their skin. When this happens they will shed their skins (4-6 times) for new ones as they grow.

The pupa is the transformation stage where the caterpillar turns into an adult (butterfly or moth). The butterfly's pupa is called a chrysalis while the moth's pupa is called a cocoon.

Once an adult, the butterfly cannot eat, it can only drink. They drink nectar from flowers, juice from rotten fruit, and other liquids. They usually have just a few days to reproduce before they die.

Egg stage



Larva stage



Pupa stage



Adult stage (Monarch emerging from chrysalis.)

