**How butterflies grow.**

Butterflies are insects which often have large, brightly coloured wings which flutter in flight. There are many species of butterflies, but how do they grow?

Butterflies have the typical four-stage insect cycle. First, winged adults lay eggs on the food plant on which their [larvae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Larva), known as [caterpillars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caterpillar), will feed because they need the nutrients to grow. Next, when the caterpillars grow, sometimes very rapidly, they will [pupate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pupa) in a [chrysalis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chrysalis).

After about 10 – 14 days when [metamorphosis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metamorphosis) is complete, the pupal skin splits and the adult insect climbs out. After its wings are expanded and dry, it flies off peacefully.

An adult butterfly is now able to find food to enable it to survive. It likes to drink any liquid and prefers it if the liquid is high in sugar. Primarily, the butterflies enjoy drinking nectar from flowers. Instead of having a mouth, butterflies sip liquids using a long, narrow, straw-like appendage called a proboscis. It extends from the front of their head and rolls up when not in use.

The adult butterfly is now fully grown and will begin to lay eggs of its own.

