

## Life Cycle of a Spider: Lesson for Kids

Like all living things, spiders go through a life cycle. This lesson will teach you about the three stages of a spider's life cycle from egg through adulthood and some neat facts about each stage.

### The Stages of a Spider's Life Cycle

You are walking through the trees when suddenly you're tangled in sticky, tickly threads. You brush them off and make sure you don't have an eight-legged hitchhiker on your head. You've just strolled through a spider web!

Spiders are **arachnids**, which are animals with eight legs and two body parts. There are about 40,000 known kinds of spiders and they live on every continent on Earth!

And although there are many different kinds of spiders, they all share the same life cycle. A **life cycle** is the stages and changes a living thing goes through from the time it is born through adulthood.

During their life cycle, spiders go from egg to spiderling to adult.

### Stage One: The Spider Egg

Female spiders lay their eggs in a special case called an egg sac. There may be only one egg or thousands of eggs in that egg sac, depending on the kind of spider. Egg sacs act like force fields, protecting them from being harmed and from animals and insects that want to snack on them.



*Black widow spider with egg sac*

Some spider moms carry their egg sacs with them or nestle them into safe spaces that they can protect, the way your family cares for you. Other kinds of spider moms leave the egg sacs on their own and hope that they survive and hatch.

### Stage Two: Spiderlings

After the spiderlings hatch, they hang out inside the egg sac until they finish their first molt. Spiders don't have a skeleton like you do, but they have a hard, outer casing called an **exoskeleton**. Although they get bigger, their exoskeleton doesn't grow with them and gets too small, the way you outgrow your shoes. So they have to shed it, or molt.

A new, bigger exoskeleton is underneath. It is soft at first but hardens up, protecting the spiderling, which looks like a tiny version of an adult spider. After the first molt, the spiderlings leave the egg sac and huddle together for a short time.

Support



*Spiderlings huddled together*

Although you live with your family as you grow up, these spider siblings don't hang out together for very long. Some kinds of spiderlings just walk off and go their own way, but others have more creative ways to travel.

Some spiderlings leave by bridging. They hike up into the leaves of a tree and then drop down onto nearby branches using a silk strand like a zip line.

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