

Sea Jelly Sting [MC]

Adapted from New Wave of Learning

Grades: K-2

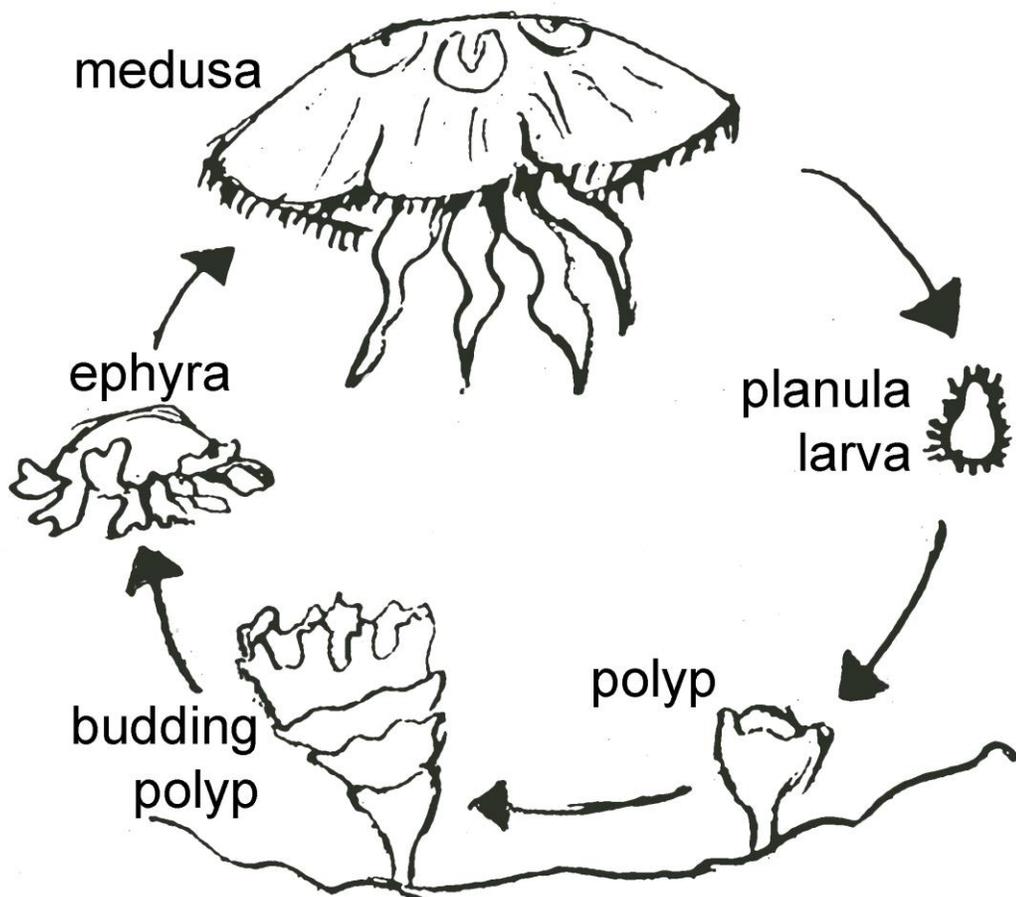
Time: 45 minutes to 1 hour

Goals: To establish an understanding of sea jelly first aid and safety.

Objectives:

Students will be able to: understand the morphology of a sea jelly; differentiate between several different species found in an estuarine ecosystem; and explain and discuss the quick response needed to take care of sea jelly stings;.

Directions: Color the life stages of the sea jelly.



Key Words:

Sea jelly

Lion's mane jelly

Nematocysts

Ctenophores

Comb jelly

Portuguese man-of-war

Tentacles

Sea nettle

Moon jelly

Cnidarians

Background Information:

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Every year thousands of sea jellies “bloom” in and around the estuary due to the increase in their food supply (planktonic fish) during the spring months. Several species are found in this area including comb jellies, moon jellies, sea nettles, Lion's mane jellies, and Portuguese man-of-war. Four of these species belong to the family Cnidarian and the fifth, the comb jellies, belong to the family Ctenophores, as they are not true sea jellies. Comb jellies are also unique in that they do not carry stinging cells (or nematocysts).

Every true sea jelly has the same basic body shape: a bell on top with tentacles hanging down from the bell, each containing thousands of nematocysts. The bell is primarily (90 percent) water and contains the nerve cells of the organism. The tentacles not only stun their prey but they also can retract up into the bell to bring the food into the body of the organism.

Depending on the length of the tentacles, the sting can be mild to severe. A basic rule of thumb is the shorter the tentacles, the more mild, and the longer the tentacles, the more severe. A sea nettle, for instance, has tentacles that reach no more than six to eight feet, whereas the tentacles of a Portuguese man-of-war can reach over forty feet in length!

Sea jelly sting first aid is very important. At one time, people believed that rubbing sand or pouring water over a sting would help ease the pain, but it does just the opposite. A tentacle that has attached itself will be able to automatically trigger the nematocysts even if it not attached to the accompanying sea jelly. By rubbing the tentacle or pouring water on it, it will trigger any nematocysts that have not already been fired off. Use a vinegar based substance on the sting to neutralize the nematocysts.