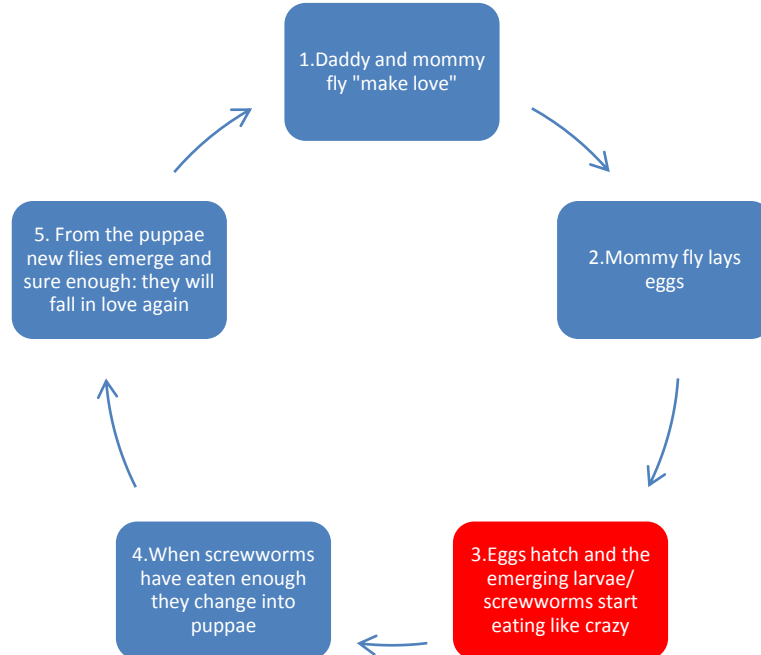


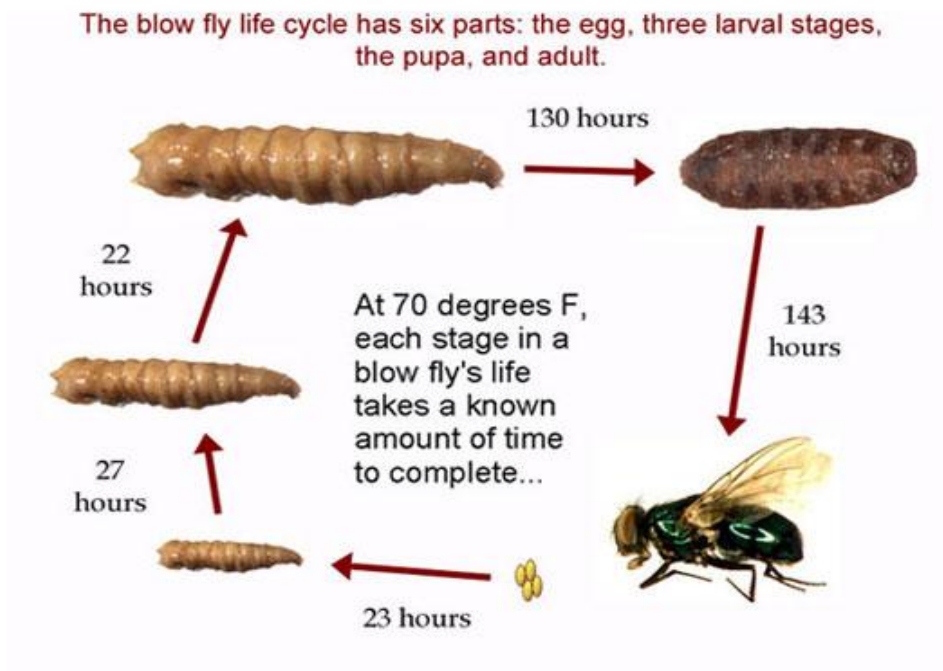
SCREWWORM

What is screwworm?

Screwworm is the larval phase of a fly, the blowfly. It is an aggressive worm parasite eating away at the tissues and muscles in wounds of live animals. All flies have identical life cycles::



The larvae of normal flies will feed on garbage. Sure enough you have seen them in the garbage can. But with blowfly or *Cochliomyia hominivorax* things are different. The fly itself looks like any other fly but the problem is in the behavior of its larvae. These so called screwworms (phase 3) will feed on live animals (and people as well) eating away ferociously at the tissue and muscle in wounds of their victims.



Frequently asked questions about screwworm

1. How can I prevent screwworm in my animals (or myself)?

- **Practice hygiene:** washing or taking a shower you will flush eggs from flies from your skin. Hygiene is favorable for your health anyway, so why not pay a little attention to hygiene for your animals?
- **Be very careful if your animal has a wound!** Female blow flies like to put their eggs in wounds. So check your animal for wounds or bloody surfaces. You should also think about dirty ear infections, umbilical cords of new born animals, a bloody vagina just after birth or operation wounds. If you detect a wound or another site that blow flies would like to lay eggs on then these are measures you can take:
 - **Flush** the area with water or an anti septic: this will flush the eggs (that are hard to see for the naked eye) from the wound and they will hatch on the ground and the emerging screw worms will have nothing to eat and die.
 - **After flushing** you can:
 - You can apply anti septic or antibacterial ointments or sprays, on top of and around which you can spray insect repellents.
 - You can cover a wound to prevent blow flies from depositing eggs in the wound. REMEMBER TO DAILY CHANGE THE BANDAGE TO MAKE SURE THERE ARE NO SCREW WORMS DEVELOPPING UNDERNEATH.

2. My animal has screw worm or I suspect my animal to have screw worm: what should I do?

1. **TAKE YOUR ANIMAL TO YOUR VETERINARIAN.** This important because:
 1. Of a correct diagnosis: your vet will be able to see whether the maggots you saw are actually screw worm maggots. When in doubt he may take a sample that he will submit to the laboratory of the Veterinary Service free of charge
 2. Your vet will treat your animal effectively
 3. Your vet will also report the case to the Veterinary Service. This is important because at the national level the Veterinary Service is conducting and coordinating an eradication effort. They need to know whether there are cases and how many to monitor the eradication effort.

3. Is screw worm dangerous for people?

Screw worm can also affect people. Normal hygiene and attention to wounds will usually be enough to prevent screw worm in man. Be careful though with people that have wounds and are not able to take good care of themselves like babies, elderly (especially when they are bedridden), people in coma or homeless practicing poor hygiene.

4. Is there always screw worm in Aruba?

No, normally Aruba is free of screw worm. You will find screw worm in many countries in South America south of Panama. But Aruba has seen outbreaks of screw worm in the past. The most recent outbreak was in 2004. The source of the present outbreak is not known since import of live animals from South America is severely restricted. Import is also possible by importing live flies (by airplane for instance) or with agricultural products.

5. Is screw worm here to stay (just like the Boa constrictor)?

No. It is possible to eradicate the blow fly and screw worm using the so called Sterile Insect Technique (SIT). This has been done in 2004. It took 8 months and a little more than 100.00 USD to declare Aruba free of screw worm again. This seems like a lot but the cost of continuously treating treating screwworm cases will be a lot higher. The SIT has also been used in eradicating screw worm from the USA and most countries in Central America

Information on the web:

<http://animal.discovery.com/videos/monsters-inside-me-the-screwworm.html>