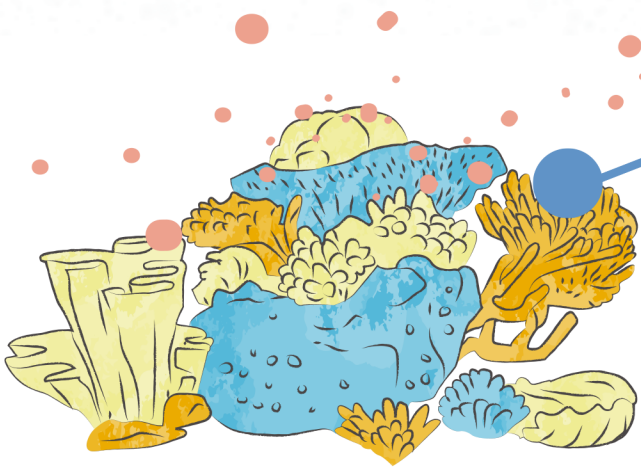
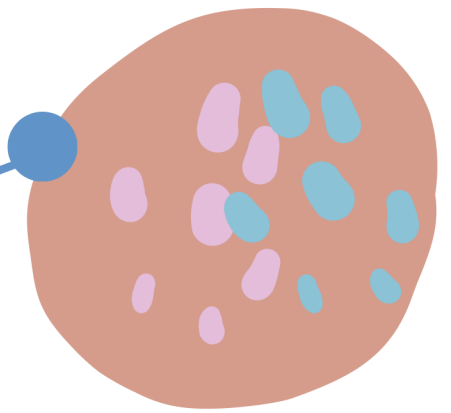


HOW CORALS SPAWN



While coral looks like a plant, it is actually an animal. Corals reproduce in two ways: asexually and sexually. Spawning is how reef-building corals sexually reproduce. Since corals cannot move around the ocean floor, they find mates by **broadcast spawning**.

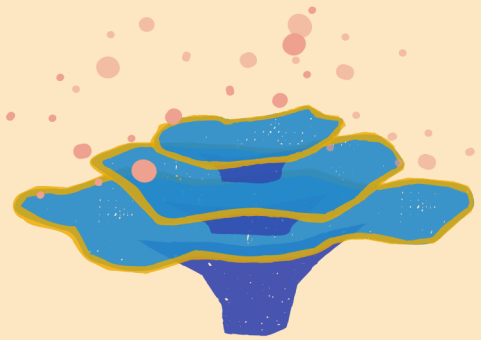
Most broadcast spawning corals are hermaphroditic, meaning that they release bundles with both egg and sperm that split open.



1.

Corals release gametes into the water

Once a year, based on cues from the lunar cycle and the water temperature, colonies of a stony coral species broadcast spawn simultaneously in a mass synchronized event—turning the ocean into an underwater blizzard of billions of colorful **gametes** or reproductive cells.



2.

Planula larvae form

A male and female gamete combine to form a baby coral or larvae, called a **planula larvae**.



Egg



Sperm



Planula Larvae

3.

Planula larvae find a hard surface to attach to

Planula larvae then float in the water for days or weeks until they find a hard surface to attach to, where they will settle and grow into a new coral colony at the slow rate of approximately 0.4 inches a year.

