

# SYMBIOSIS

## Definition:

Symbiosis is defined as a close and long-term biological interaction between two dissimilar organisms benefiting either one or both organisms involved. Symbiosis can be obligatory (symbionts are entirely dependent on the host) or facultative (symbionts can live independently).

### Major Symbiotic Relationships

#### Commensalism

A relationship in which one organism (symbiont) obtains food or other benefits from the other organism (host) without affecting it.

##### Example:

A disk on the head of a remora enables the fish to attach itself to large fish, like sharks and whales. When these larger fish feed, the remora helps itself to the extra food.

#### Mutualism

A relationship in which both the organisms (host and symbiont) benefit each other by interacting in some way.

##### Example:

Oxpeckers feed on ticks, flies, and other insects on the skins of grazing mammals. The oxpecker receives its meal, and the host becomes pest free.

#### Parasitism

A relationship in which one organism (symbiont) benefits at the expense of the other organism (host).

##### Example:

Fleas or ticks that live on dogs and cats are parasites. They live off the blood of the host animals and harm them by causing diseases.