



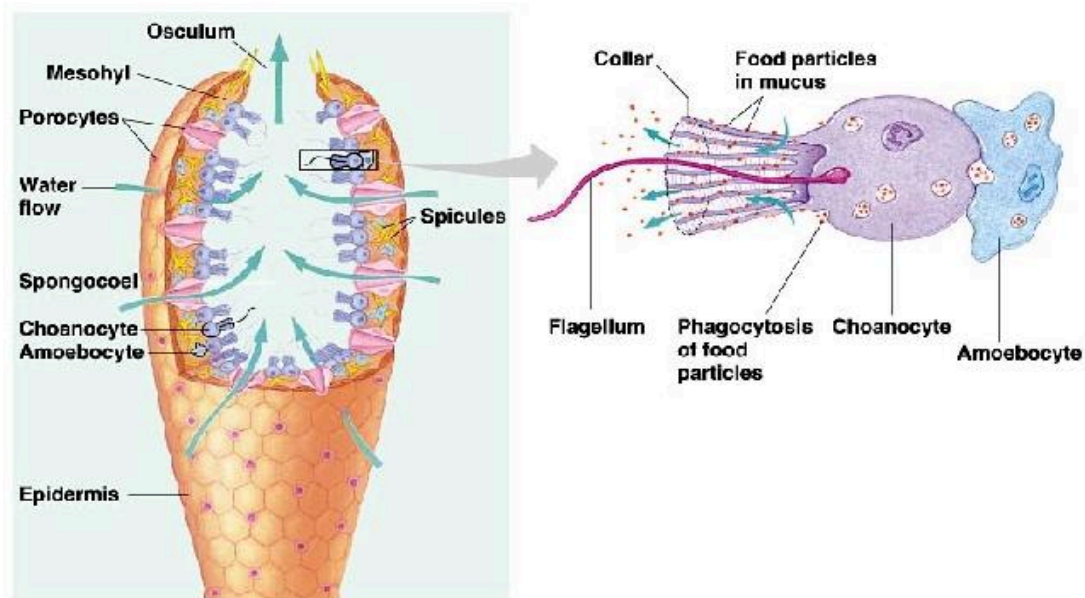
Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: **PORIFERA**



- By far the most primitive animal alive
- Member of the Parazoa subkingdom – multicellular, but no true tissues (and certainly no organs)
- Cells are quite independent – if you break up the sponge into individual cells, and give the mush several hours, the cells will re-form themselves into a sponge!
- Sponges are sessile (non-moving). The ancient Greeks assumed they were plants.
- No nerves, no muscles. Individual cells can move and react, though.

## Sponge Anatomy



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- A sponge's purpose in life is to move water through itself. Water moves in through the ostia (small holes) and out through the osculum (big hole). Nutrient molecules in the water are picked up by choanocyte cells and digested by amoebocyte cells.
- Sponges are hermaphrodites – they make both eggs and sperm.