

**I want to know!**

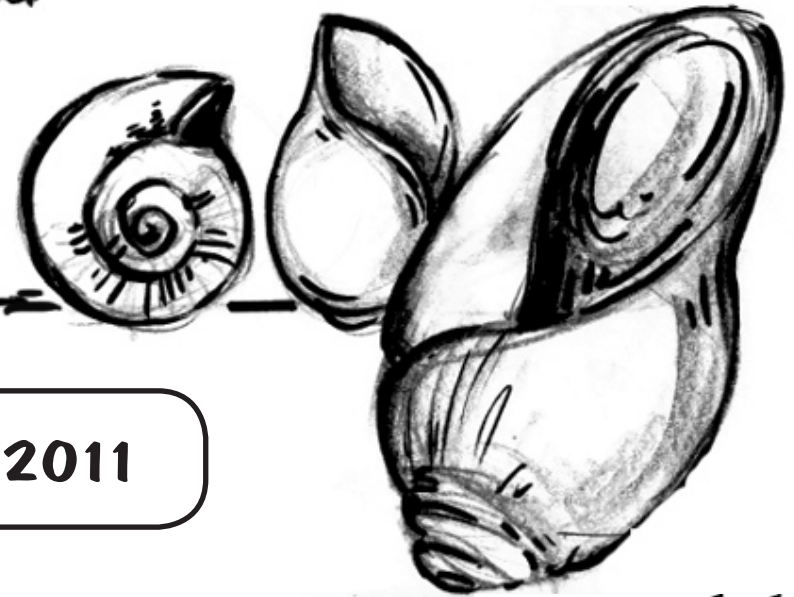
# **The Truth About Snails!**

Based on the research of Dr. Bajope Baluku, CRSN-Lwiro, DRC



## **Learn about:**

- The importance of snails in the environment
- Which snails carry disease, and how you can protect yourself and your family
- Snails as a source of food



**Chichewa version No. 1. July, 2011**



**The National Museums of Malawi**  
in collaboration with The Field Museum, Chicago, USA

**The Field  
Museum**

# What is a mollusk?



①

A mollusk is an animal

②

It is one of the most ancient animals we have on earth (mollusks have existed for millions of years)

**A Fossil of an ancient snail—** now turned to stone after millions of years. You can find these stone remnants of ancient life nearly everywhere in Africa

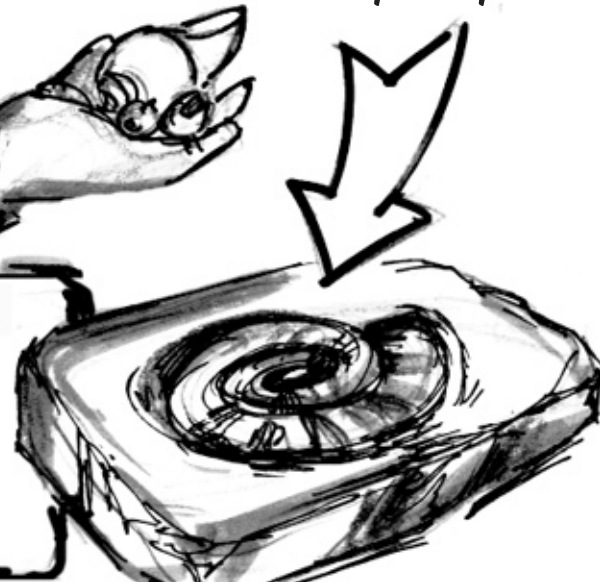
100 million years ago

1 million years ago

TODAY

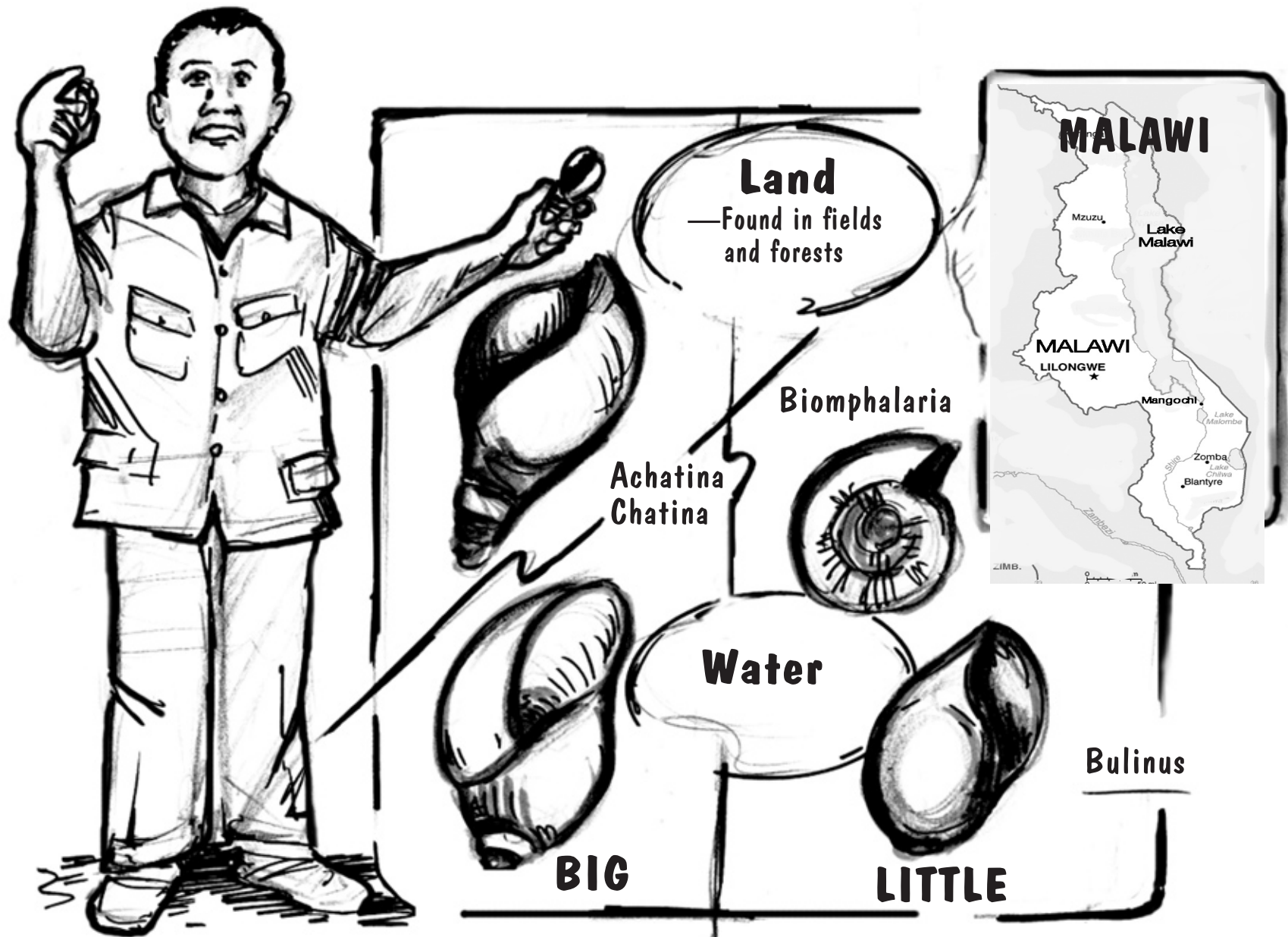


The first humans  
appear on earth



# What are the main types of snails? (mollusks) in Malawi?

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# What is a mollusk?

③ Mollusks live on both land, and in the water



④ Mollusks play an important role in our environment because they provide food for many animals

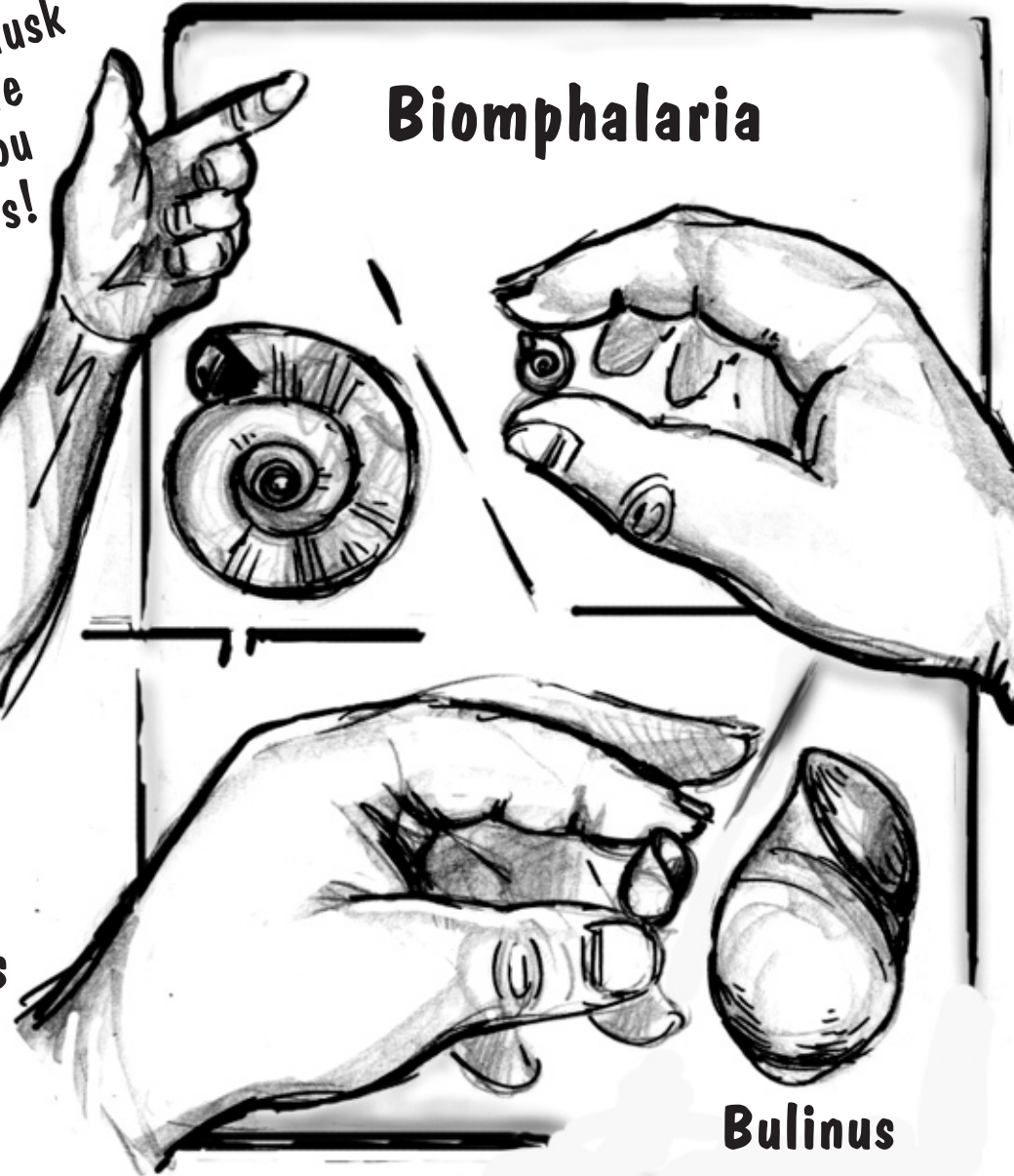
# Some mollusks can transmit sickness to a human

4

*This type of mollusk carries a parasite that can give you schistosomiasis!*

**The two types of snails that transmit the sickness known as schistosomiasis are snails that are found in water**

**Biomphalaria**



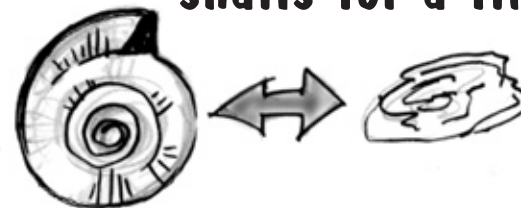
**Bulinus**



## 5 What is schistosomiasis?

It is a tiny animal that infects humans and makes you sick....

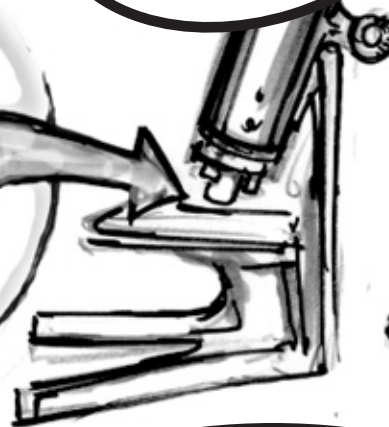
It lives within snails for a time



It is so small that you can only see it with a microscope!

It is so small that it fits on the head of a pin

Enlargement  
X 1000



### Microscope:

— instrument used by scientists to observe microbes and other animals that are too small to be seen by the human eye alone...

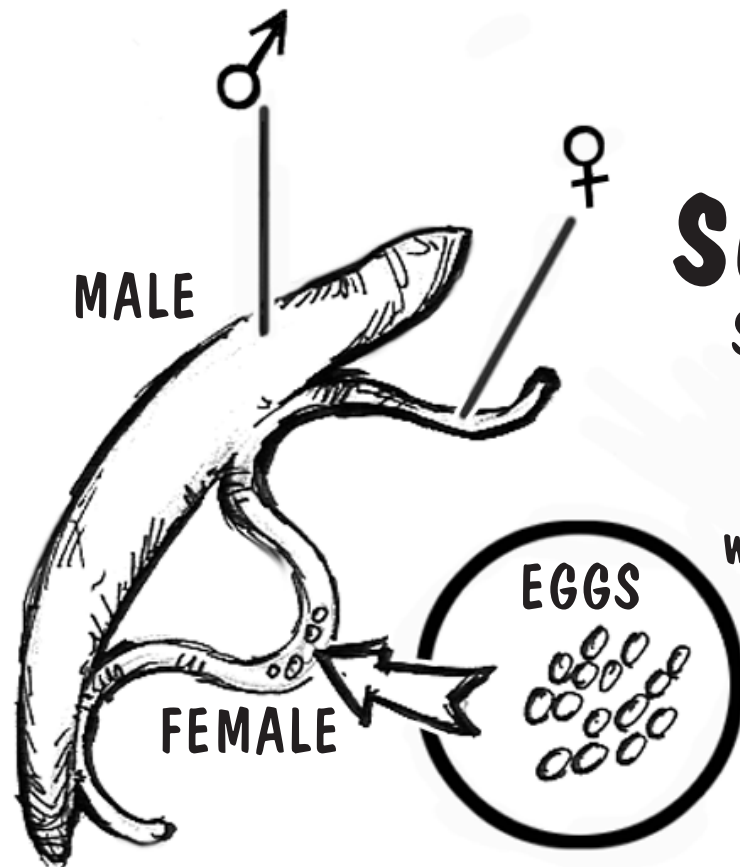
**Schistosomiasis  
organism**



# A closer look at a schistosoma

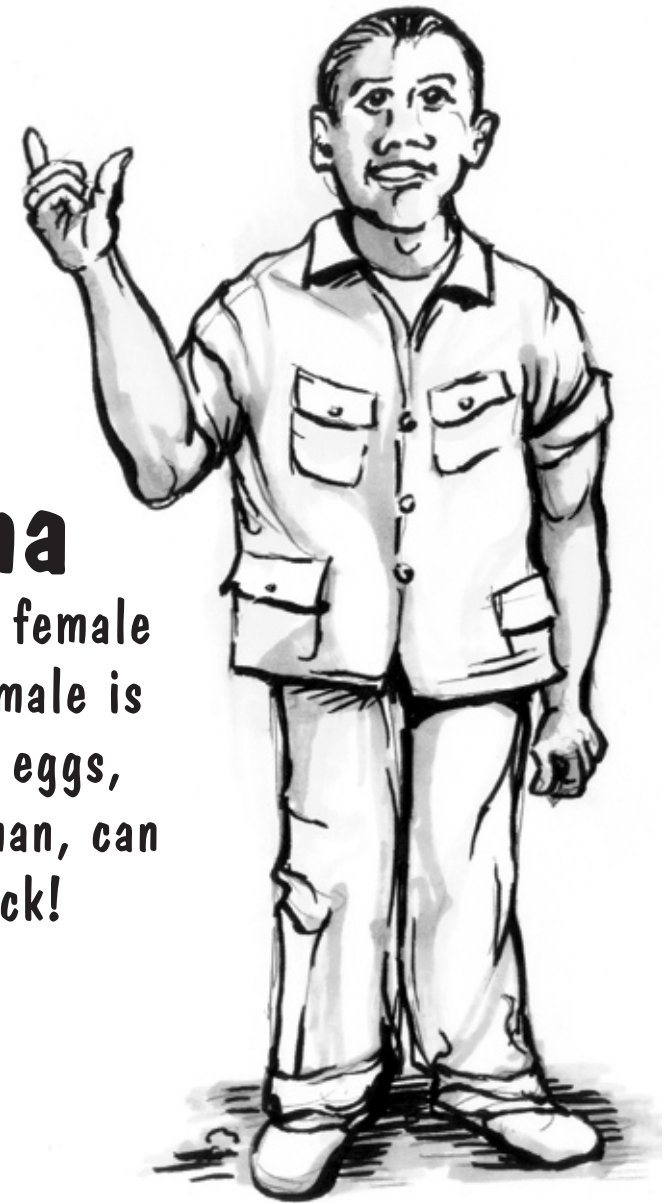
It is a tiny parasitic animal that carries the sickness called *schistosomiase oubleharziose*.

Now we are going to look at some of the ways to avoid being made sick by this parasite—



## Schistosoma

Shown is a male and female schistosoma. The female is full of eggs! These eggs, when infecting a human, can make you very sick!



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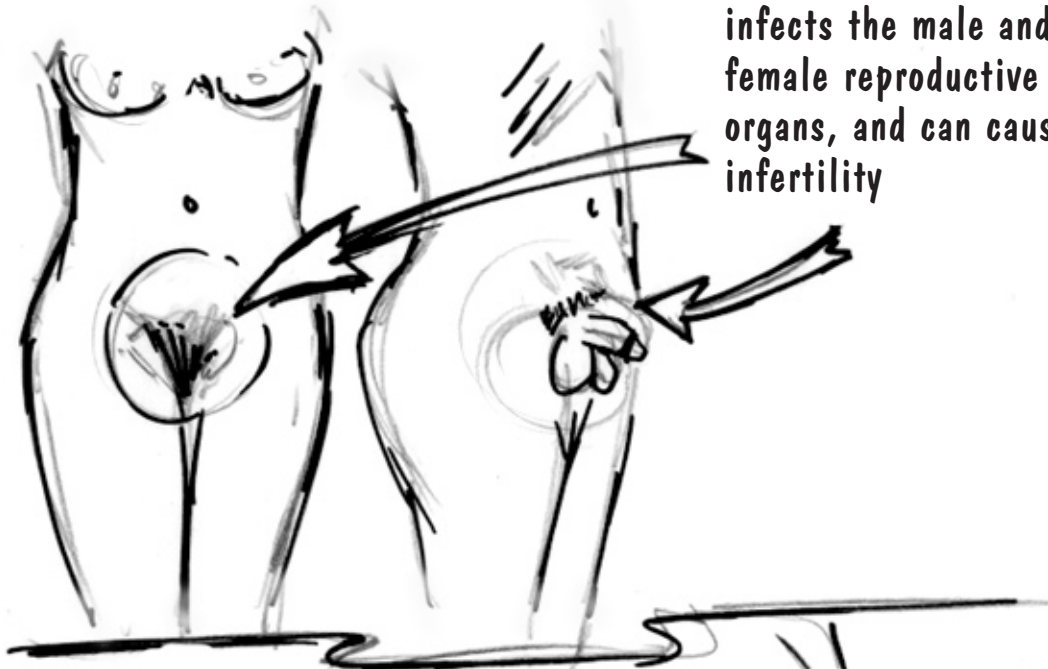
# What is schistosomiase?

It is often a disease  
of the stomach

A distended  
stomach is often  
a symptom of the  
disease



**Digestive  
system**



Schistosomiase  
infects the male and  
female reproductive  
organs, and can cause  
infertility

## THE SIGNS OF THE DISEASE



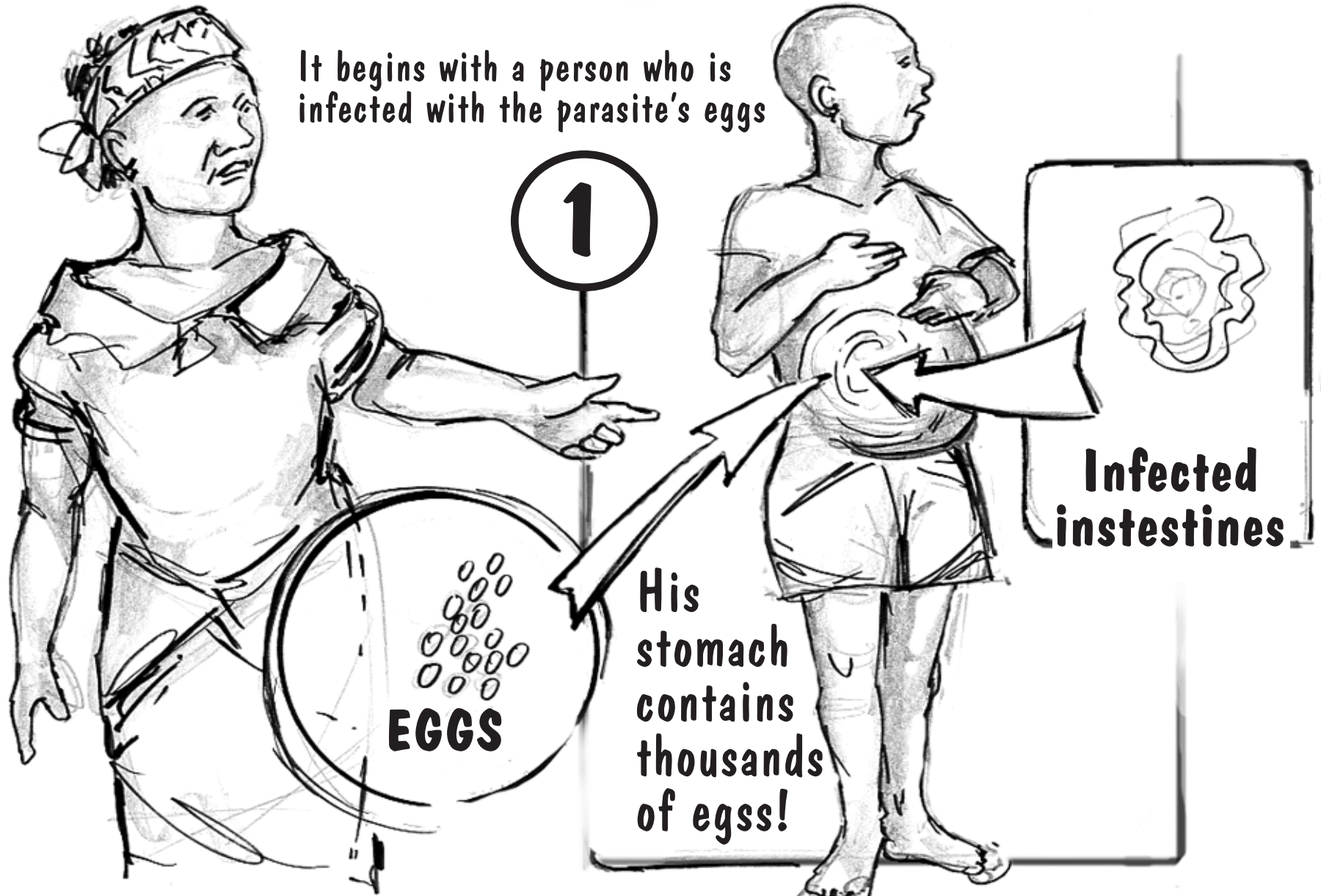
**indigestion**

**Diarrhea**

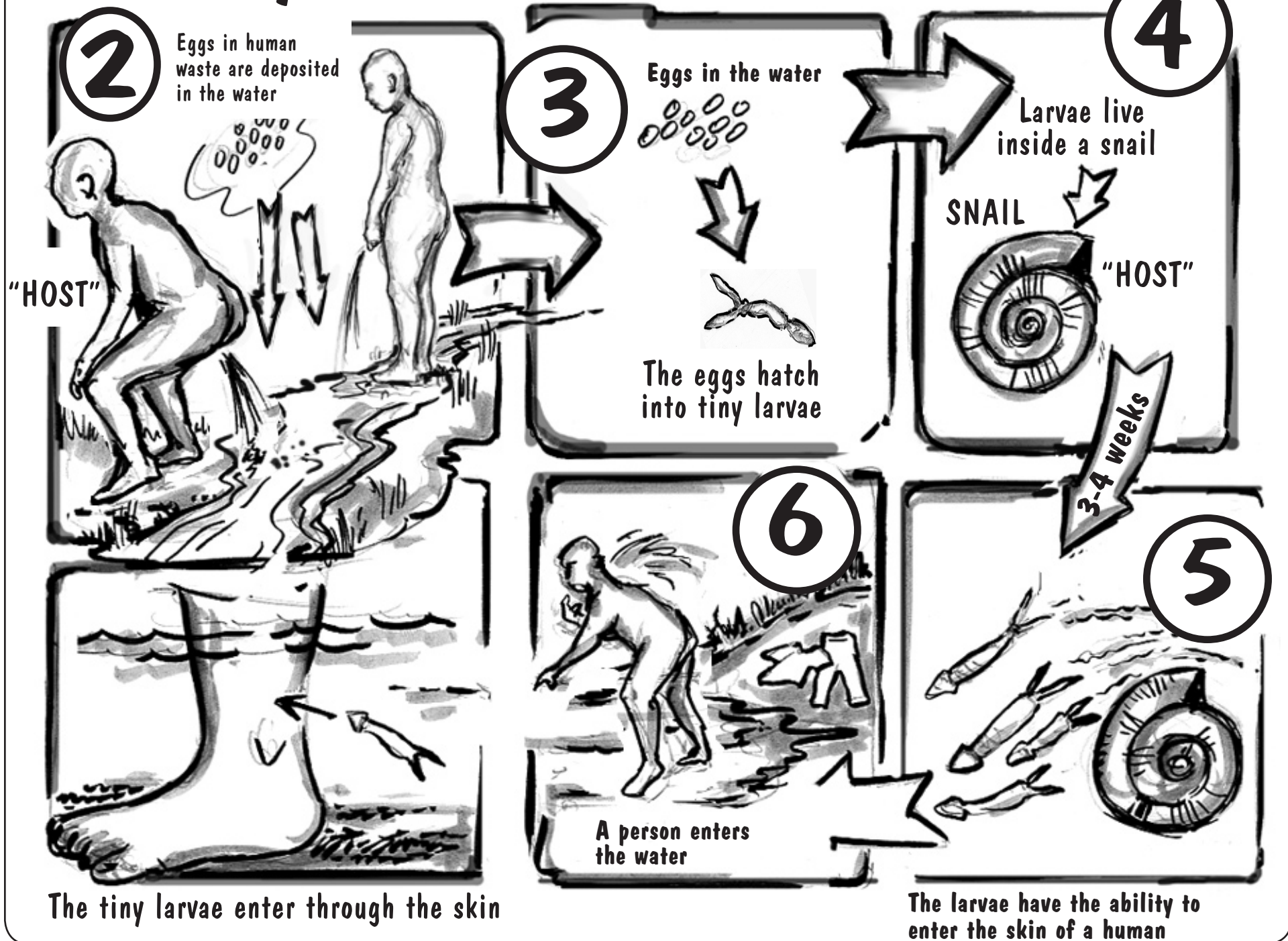


Now, let's see how the life cycle of the schistosomiasis begins... and how snails play a role as hosts—

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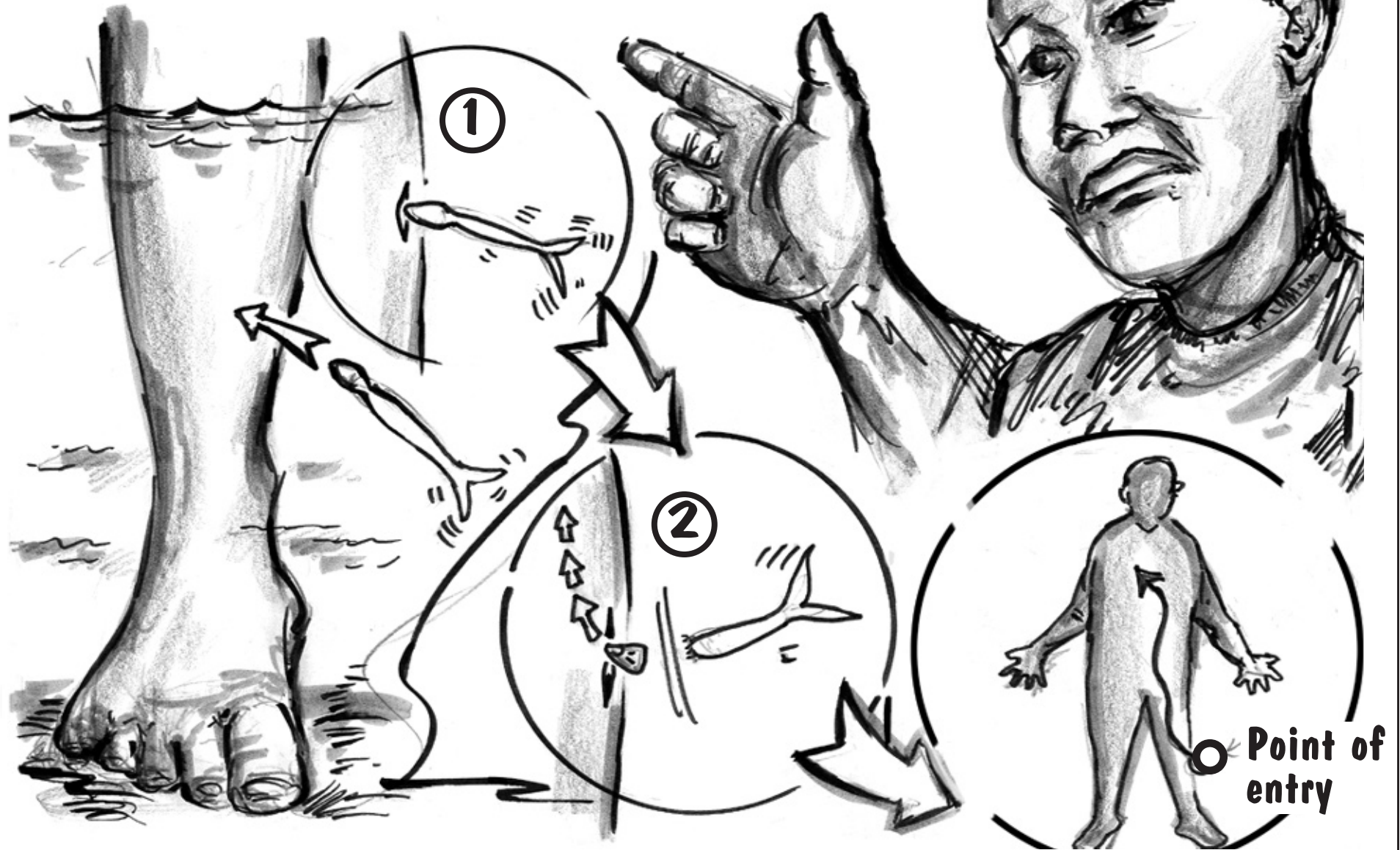
# 9 Life Cycle of the Schistosomiasis





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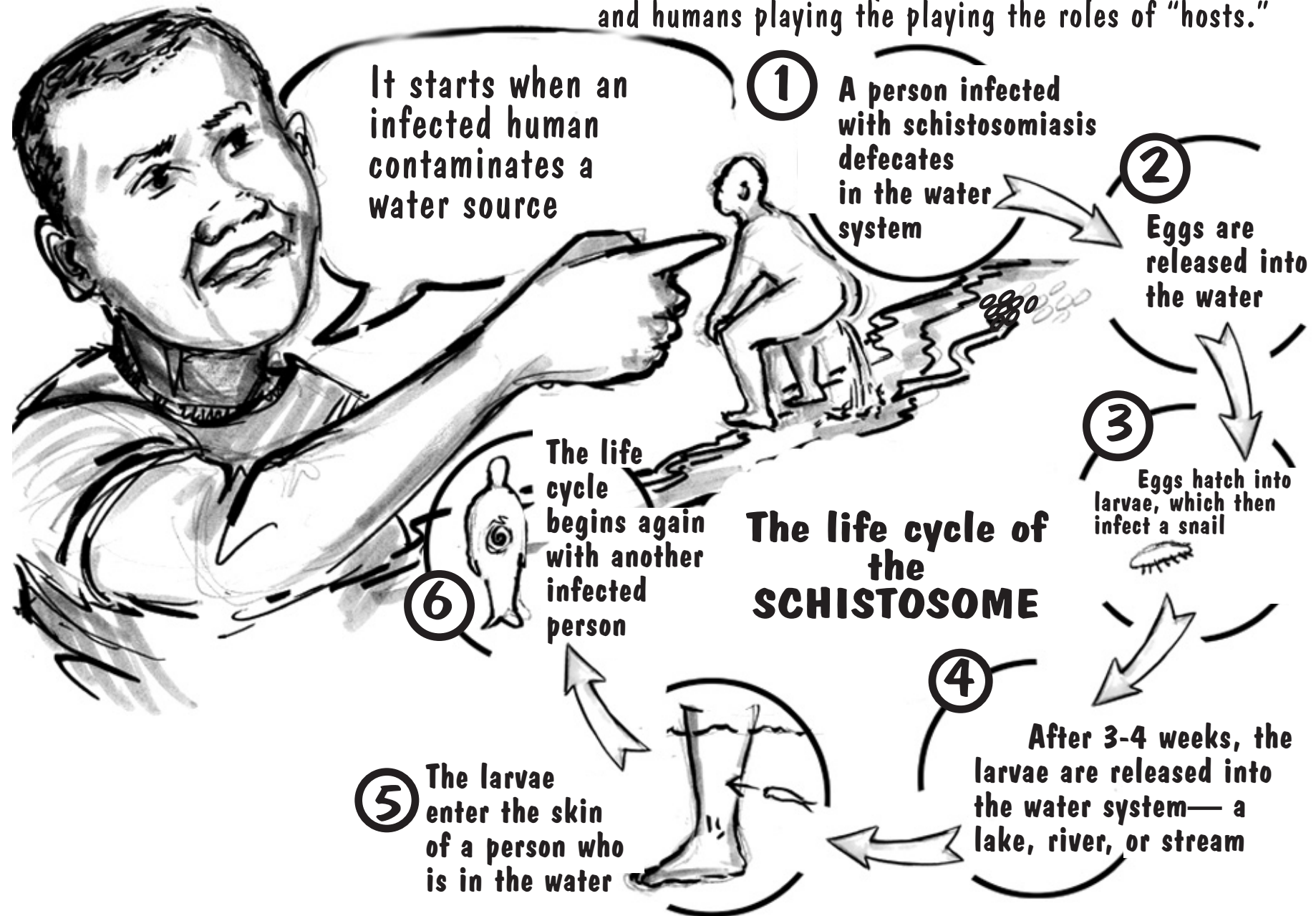
So, the schistosomiasis parasite infects you while you are in the water!





# Let's review the life cycle of the schistosome

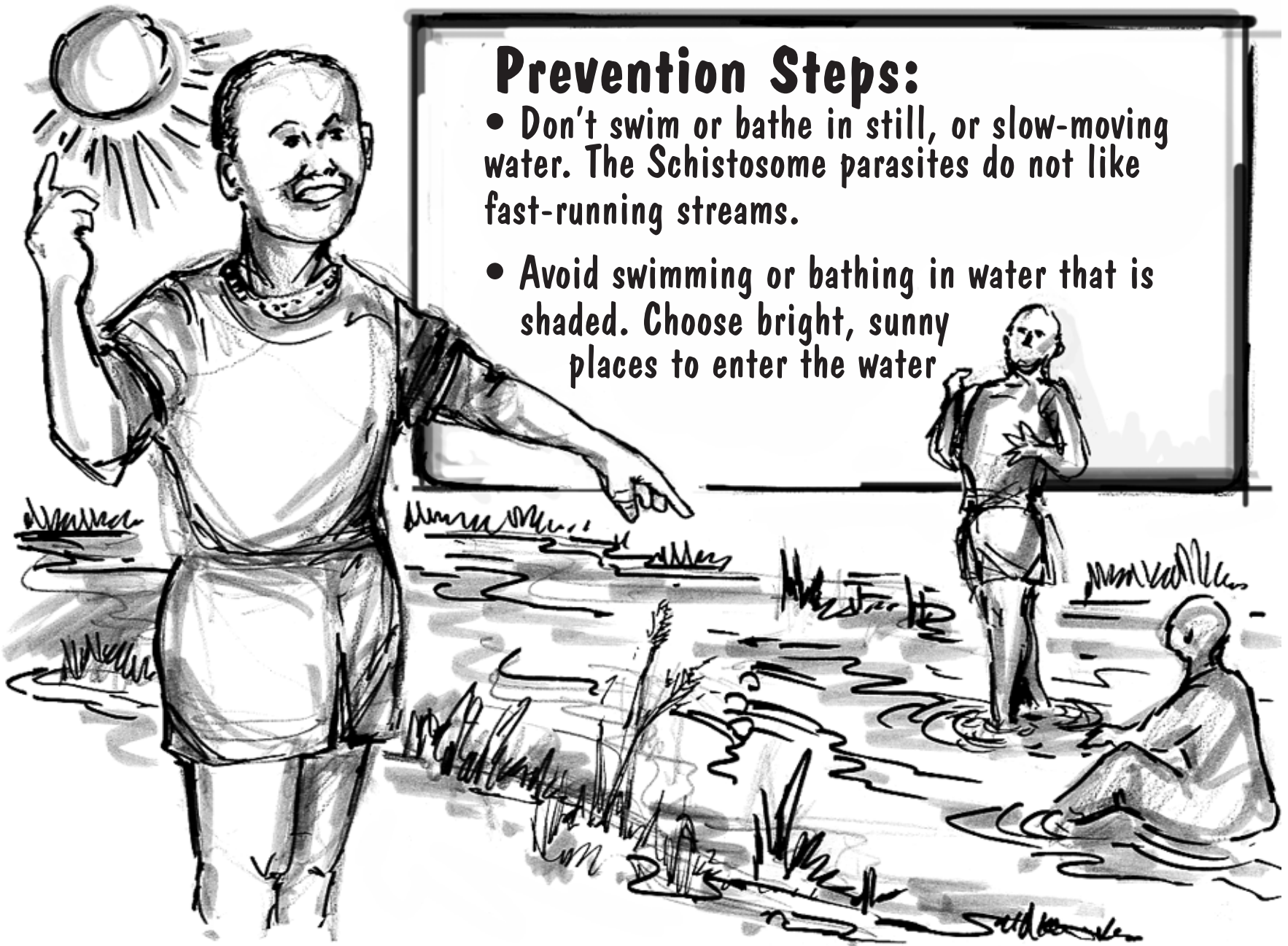
It's a combination of poor sanitation, parasites, and snails and humans playing the roles of "hosts."



# How to prevent infection from schistosomiasis—

## Prevention Steps:

- Don't swim or bathe in still, or slow-moving water. The Schistosome parasites do not like fast-running streams.
- Avoid swimming or bathing in water that is shaded. Choose bright, sunny places to enter the water





**Remember! It is totally OK to drink water that has the schistosom parasite.**

**You cannot be infected by drinking water.**



It is also safe to wash clothes in water that contains the parasite— you can't be infected in that way, either

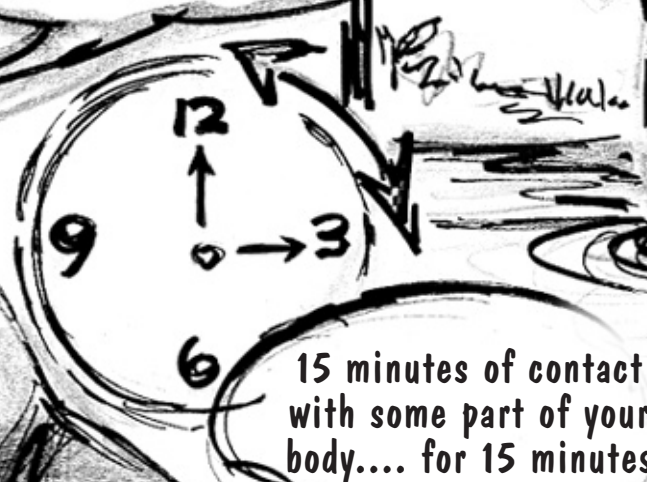
You can only be infected with the parasite if your body comes in contact with the water— and the parasite enters your skin





**REMEMBER!**

The only way to become infected with schistosomiasis is for your body to be in contact with contaminated water for more than 15 minutes



15 minutes of contact with some part of your body.... for 15 minutes

**15 minutes!**



**Snails are  
delicious to eat!**



**It is easy to prepare snails  
so that they can be eaten by  
your family....**



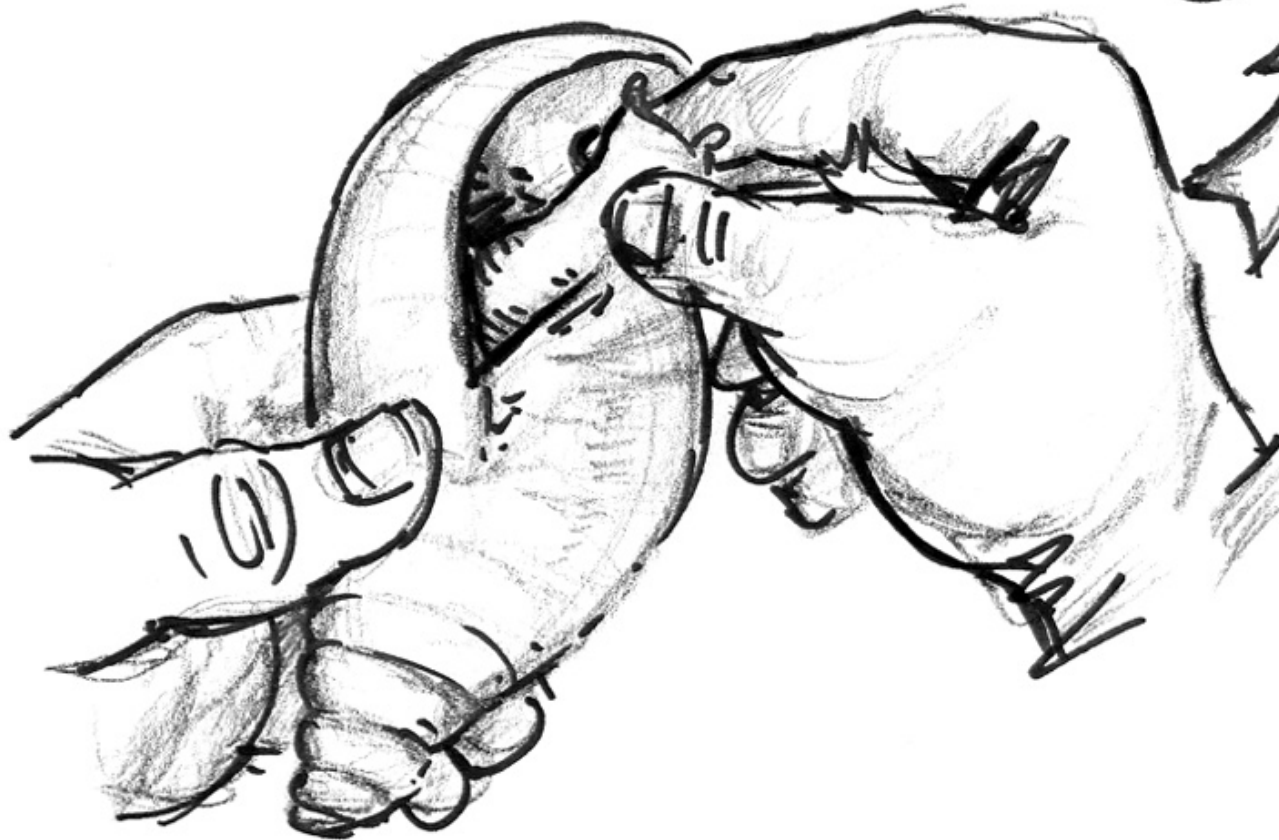
**Here is how  
you prepare  
snails for  
dinner!**



# Serve snails as an excellent source of protein!

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**Remove the snail from its shell—just pull it out.**



Fry the snails in a pan, and then serve them along with rice, corn, fufufu. You can also add vegetables.

**Remember:** eating cooked snails will NOT transmit the schistosom parasite to you or your family.

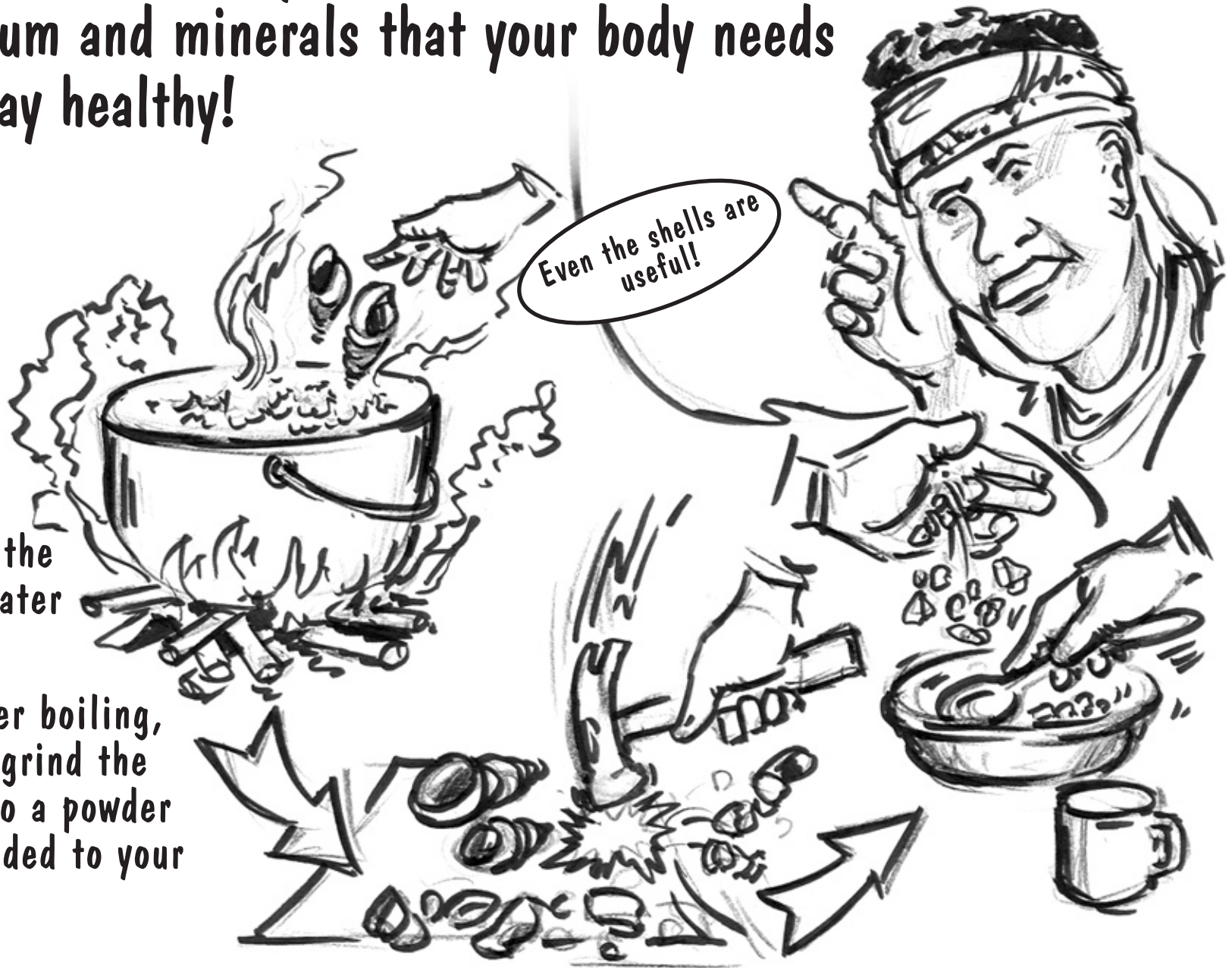


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**The shells of snails can also provide additional nourishment to your meals. The shells contain the calcium and minerals that your body needs to stay healthy!**

First, boil the shells in water

Then, after boiling, smash or grind the shells into a powder that is added to your food



**Also, broken snail shells provide nourishment for your chickens!**

**You can give ground snail shells to your chickens:**

- Boil the shells for 30 minutes
- Dry them in the sun
- Grind or smash them into small pieces
- Give them to your chickens





# Learn about the natural history of MALAWI



## For More Information:

National Museums of Malawi, Top Mandala, Blantyre  
or  
The Chichiri Museum, Blantyre

**Kabuku Kosindikizidwa Ndi**

Mogwiri zana ndi The Field Museum, Chicago, USA

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