



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BIOFILM LIFE CYCLE: 1) Free-floating, or planktonic, bacteria encounter a submerged surface and within minutes can become attached. They begin to produce slimy extracellular polymeric substances (EPS) and to colonize the surface. 2) EPS production allows the emerging biofilm community to develop a complex, three-dimensional structure that is influenced by a variety of environmental factors. Biofilm communities can develop within hours. 3) Biofilms can propagate through detachment of small or large clumps of cells, or by a type of "seeding dispersal" that releases individual cells. Either type of detachment allows bacteria to attach to a surface or to a biofilm downstream of the original community.

http://www.biofilm.montana.edu/biofilm-basics/what_are_biofilms.html