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20th-Century Medicine Books

Biotechnology Books, Endocrinology

In 1905, British scientist Ernest H. Starling introduced the word hormone to describe substances secreted by the endocrine glands that regulate body functions. The discovery of adrenaline, or epinephrine, in 1901 led to identification and isolation of other hormones. One of the most important advances was the discovery of insulin by Canadian scientists Frederick Banting and Charles H. Best and Scottish physiologist John J. Macleod in 1921. For years people with diabetes mellitus used insulin extracted from animal pancreases. In 1981, human insulin produced using biotechnology became available. American physicians made another major advance in endocrinology in 1949. They discovered that cortisone, an adrenal gland hormone, relieved inflammation. New discoveries about human sex hormones later led to the first birth control pills.