

# **Adolf Friedrich Johann Butenandt**

## **Encyclopedia Article**

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# Adolf Friedrich Johann Butenandt

**1903-1995**

German chemist whose isolation of sex hormones earned him a share of the 1939 Nobel Prize for Chemistry. Butenandt received his Ph.D. from the University of Göttingen in 1927, and spent several years teaching at Göttingen and at the Institute of Technology in Danzig (now Gdansk, Poland). In 1929 Butenandt isolated estrone, a hormone responsible for sexual development in females. In 1931 he isolated its male counterpart, androsterone, and in 1934, progesterone, which plays an important role in female reproduction. He later discovered a way to synthesize both progesterone and the male hormone testosterone, which paved the way for the development of steroids and birth control pills.