

Emil Adolf Von Behring Encyclopedia Article

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Emil Adolf Von Behring

1854-1917

German microbiologist recognized as one of the founders of immunology and serum therapy. Born in Hansdorf, Germany, Behring studied medicine in Berlin before working at the Robert Koch Institute. While investigating toxin-producing bacteria, he injected dead or weakened diphtheria bacilli into guinea pigs and showed how the toxin was neutralized by the injection. He coined the term "antitoxin." He found the same results with tetanus. Behring tested with the first human patient in 1880 and in 1892 widespread immunization began. His work set the stage for antitoxins for a number of diseases. He received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1901.