

Insulin

Dorothy Hodgkin pioneered the use of X-ray diffraction for determining structures of biological molecules. Following her studies of penicillin (blue pill) and vitamin B12 (orange pill), she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1964 for contributions to the development of crystallography. Hodgkin later determined the structure of insulin, the hormone that controls glucose levels in the blood and one of the earliest protein structures.

"I used to say the evening that I developed the first X-ray photograph I took of insulin in 1935 was the most exciting moment of my life. But the Saturday afternoon in late July 1969, when we realized that the electron density map was interpretable, runs that moment very close."

Dorothy Hodgkin

