Elias James Corey Encyclopedia Article

Elias James Corey

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Elias James Corey

1928-

American chemist who was awarded the 1990 Nobel Prize for Chemistry for his work on retrosynthetic analysis, a technique for simplifying the synthesis of large complex molecules. Corey successfully synthesized many organic substances previously found only in nature. He developed the synthetic prostaglandins, a hormone-like compound used to treat infertility and induce labor, and ginkgolide B, an active chemical compound used to treat asthma and circulatory problems. The synthesis of these new biologically active molecules has contributed to understanding how diseases develop at the molecular level.