Johann Friedrich Miescher Encyclopedia Article

Johann Friedrich Miescher

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Johann Friedrich Miescher

1844-1895

Swiss scientist who discovered nucleic acids. Miescher found that the nuclei of the white blood cells found in pus contained a substance containing phosphorous and nitrogen. The substance was first called nuclein, but after Miescher separated it into protein and an acid molecule, nuclein became known as nucleic acid. The name changed again to its current one, deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). He also discovered that the concentration of carbon dioxide, not that of oxygen, in the blood regulates breathing.