Rita Levi-Montalcini Encyclopedia Article

Rita Levi-Montalcini

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Contents

Rita Levi-Montalcini Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Rita Levi-Montalcini.....3

Rita Levi-Montalcini

1909-

Italian-born American biologist who with Stanley Cohen won the Nobel Prize for medicine in 1986. At the age of 20 Levi-Montalcini convinced her father that she should pursue a professional career. She studied medicine at the University of Turin and began her research on nerve cells in 1936. Working with Viktor Hamburger in the United States, Levi-Montalcini studied a substance that caused nerve cells to grow. She and Stanley Cohen successfully isolated this substance, called nerve-growth factor.