Pharmacology

University Medicine · Vocabulary in context

Word	Example
pharmacology	**Pharmacology** studies how drugs work in the body.
half-life /hɑːf laɪf/	After one **half-life**, half the nuclei have decayed.
volume of distribution	A large **volume of distribution** means the drug spreads into the tissues.
clearance /ˈklɪərəns/	**Clearance** is how much plasma is cleaned of a substance each minute.
bioavailability	A **bioavailability** of 0.6 means 60% of the drug reaches the blood. 0.6 60%
first-pass metabolism	In **first-pass metabolism**, the liver breaks down some of the drug before it reaches the body.
steady state /ˈstedi steɪt/	A drug reaches **steady state** after about five half-lives.
loading dose	A **loading dose** is a big first dose that raises drug levels quickly.
potency	A drug with high **potency** works at a small dose.
efficacy /ˈefɪkəsi/	**Efficacy** is the biggest effect a drug can give.
partial agonists	**Partial agonists** switch on a receptor, but not fully.
therapeutic index	A wide **therapeutic index** means the drug is safe.

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toxidromes	**Toxidromes** are groups of signs that point to a type of poison.
diuretic	A **diuretic** makes you pass more urine.
ACE inhibitors	**ACE inhibitors** lower blood pressure.
warfarin	**Warfarin** stops blood from clotting too easily.
anticoagulants /ˌæntɪkəʊˈægjʊlənts/	**Anticoagulants** reduce blood clotting.
selective toxicity	**Selective toxicity** means a drug harms germs but not human cells.
cell-cycle-specific	A **cell-cycle-specific** drug works only when cells are dividing.
tolerance /ˈtɒlərəns/	With **tolerance**, the same dose has less effect over time.
dependence /dɪˈpendəns/	**Dependence** shows when stopping a drug causes unpleasant symptoms.
opioids /ˈəʊpɪɔɪdz/	Morphine is one of the **opioids**, which reduce pain.
adverse drug reactions	**Adverse drug reactions** are harmful effects of a medicine.
enzyme induction	**Enzyme induction** makes the liver break down drugs faster.
enzyme inhibition	**Enzyme inhibition** makes the liver break down drugs more slowly.

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