



Pharm School

If you take HIV meds, you'll want to know how the drugs work—that's pharmacology. But other pharma lingo can be tough to swallow. Some Rx-planations:

December 1, 2004 By David Gelman, MD

Pharmacodynamics

The crux of pharmacology: how a drug actually works in your system. Researchers investigate, for instance, how the drug's molecular shape can affect its power.

Pharmacokinetics

The study of how a medication is absorbed, processed and eventually eliminated by the body. Labs can determine a drug's half-life (how long it takes for the body to excrete half of the drug) and its C_{max} (the maximum concentration it reaches). These measures determine the size and frequency of an HIV med's dosing.

Pharmacogenetics

Your genes can wildly alter the way a drug affects you (see "Meet Your Host," *POZ*, November 2004). Pharmacogeneticists try to identify how different people respond to drugs (more side effects in one person, longer half-life in another) and probe their genes for the cause.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

<http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Pharm-School-11261-8415>