

Remington's Pharmaceutical Sciences

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Eighteenth Edition

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Table of Contents

Part 1 Orientation		44	Cholinomimetic Drugs	889
1	Scope	3	45 Adrenergic and Adrenergic Neuron Blocking Drugs	898
2	Evolution of Pharmacy	8	46 Antimuscarinic and Antispasmodic Drugs	907
3	Ethics	20	47 Skeletal Muscle Relaxants	916
4	The Practice of Community Pharmacy	28	48 Diuretic Drugs	929
5	Opportunities for Pharmacists in the Pharmaceuti- cal Industry	33	49 Uterine and Antimigraine Drugs	943
6	Pharmacists in Government	38	50 Hormones	948
7	Drug Information	49	51 Vitamins and Other Nutrients	1002
8	Research	60	52 Enzymes	1035
Part 2 Pharmaceutics		53	General Anesthetics	1039
9	Metrology and Calculation	69	54 Local Anesthetics	1048
10	Statistics	104	55 Sedatives and Hypnotics	1057
11	Computer Science	138	56 Antiepileptics	1072
12	Calculus	145	57 Psychopharmacologic Agents	1082
13	Molecular Structure, Properties and States of Matter	158	58 Analgesics and Antipyretics	1097
14	Complex Formation	182	59 Histamine and Antihistamines	1123
15	Thermodynamics	197	60 Central Nervous System Stimulants	1132
16	Solutions and Phase Equilibria	207	61 Antineoplastic and Immunosuppressive Drugs ...	1138
17	Ionic Solutions and Electrolytic Equilibria	228	62 Antimicrobial Drugs	1163
18	Reaction Kinetics	247	63 Parasitocides	1242
19	Disperse Systems	257	64 Pesticides	1249
20	Rheology	310	65 Diagnostic Drugs	1272
Part 3 Pharmaceutical Chemistry		66	Pharmaceutical Necessities	1286
21	Inorganic Pharmaceutical Chemistry	329	67 Adverse Drug Reactions	1330
22	Organic Pharmaceutical Chemistry	356	68 Pharmacogenetics	1344
23	Natural Products	380	69 Pharmacological Aspects of Drug Abuse	1349
24	Drug Nomenclature—United States Adopted Names	412	70 Introduction of New Drugs	1365
25	Structure-Activity Relationship and Drug Design	422	Part 7 Biological Products	
Part 4 Testing and Analysis		71	Principles of Immunology	1379
26	Analysis of Medicinals	435	72 Immunizing Agents and Diagnostic Skin Antigens	1389
27	Biological Testing	484	73 Allergenic Extracts	1405
28	Clinical Analysis	495	74 Biotechnology and Drugs	1416
29	Chromatography	529	Part 8 Pharmaceutical Preparations and Their Manufacture	
30	Instrumental Methods of Analysis	555	75 Preformulation	1435
31	Dissolution	589	76 Bioavailability and Bioequivalency Testing	1451
Part 5 Radioisotopes in Pharmacy and Medicine		77	Separation	1459
32	Fundamentals of Radioisotopes	605	78 Sterilization	1470
33	Medical Applications of Radioisotopes	624	79 Tonicity, Osmoticity, Osmolality and Osmolarity .	1481
Part 6 Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Agents		80	Plastic Packaging Materials	1499
34	Diseases: Manifestations and Patho- physiology	655	81 Stability of Pharmaceutical Products	1504
35	Drug Absorption, Action and Disposition	697	82 Quality Assurance and Control	1513
36	Basic Pharmacokinetics	725	83 Solutions, Emulsions, Suspensions and Extractives	1519
37	Clinical Pharmacokinetics	746	84 Parenteral Preparations	1545
38	Topical Drugs	757	85 Intravenous Admixtures	1570
39	Gastrointestinal Drugs	774	86 Ophthalmic Preparations	1581
40	Blood, Fluids, Electrolytes and Hematologic Drugs	800	87 Medicated Applications	1596
41	Cardiovascular Drugs	831	88 Powders	1615
42	Respiratory Drugs	860	89 Oral Solid Dosage Forms	1633
43	Sympathomimetic Drugs	870	90 Coating of Pharmaceutical Dosage Forms	1666
			91 Sustained-Release Drug Delivery Systems	1676
			92 Aerosols	1694
			Part 9 Pharmaceutical Practice	
		93	Ambulatory Patient Care	1715
		94	Institutional Patient Care	1737
		95	Long-Term Care Facilities	1758
		96	The Pharmacist and Public Health	1773

Sustained-Release Drug Delivery Systems

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The goal of any drug delivery system is to provide a therapeutic amount of drug to the proper site in the body to achieve promptly, and then maintain, the desired drug concentration. This idealized objective points to the two aspects most important to drug delivery, namely, *spatial placement* and *temporal delivery* of a drug. Spatial placement relates to targeting a drug to a specific organ or tissue, while temporal delivery refers to controlling the rate of drug delivery to the target tissue. An appropriately designed sustained-release drug delivery system can be a major advance toward solving these two problems. It is for this reason that the science and technology responsible for development of sustained-release pharmaceuticals have been and continue to be the focus of a great deal of attention in both

industrial and academic laboratories. There currently exist numerous products on the market formulated for both oral and parenteral routes of administration that claim sustained or controlled drug delivery. The bulk of research has been directed at oral dosage forms that satisfy the temporal aspect of drug delivery, but many of the newer approaches under investigation may allow for spatial placement as well. This chapter will define and explain the nature of sustained-release drug therapy, briefly outline relevant physicochemical and biological properties of a drug that affect sustained-release performance and review the more common types of oral and parenteral sustained-release dosage forms. In addition, a brief discussion of some methods currently being used to develop targeted delivery systems will be presented.

Conventional Drug Therapy

To gain an appreciation for the value of sustained drug therapy it is useful to review some fundamental aspects of conventional drug delivery.¹ Consider single dosing of a hypothetical drug that follows a simple one-compartment pharmacokinetic model for disposition. Depending on the route of administration, a conventional dosage form of the drug, eg, a solution, suspension, capsule, tablet, etc, probably will produce a drug blood level versus time profile similar to that shown in Fig 91-1. The term "drug blood level" refers to the concentration of drug in blood or plasma, but the concentration in any tissue could be plotted on the ordinate. It can be seen from this figure that administration of a drug by either intravenous injection or an extravascular route, eg, orally, intramuscularly or rectally, does not maintain drug blood levels within the therapeutic range for extended periods of time. The short duration of action is due to the inability of conventional dosage forms to control temporal delivery. If an attempt is made to maintain drug blood levels in the therapeutic range for longer periods by, for example, increasing the dose of an intravenous injection,

as shown by the dotted line in the figure, toxic levels may be produced at early times. This obviously is undesirable and the approach therefore is unsuitable. An alternate approach is to administer the drug repetitively using a constant dosing interval, as in multiple-dose therapy. This is shown in Fig 91-2 for the oral route. In this case the drug blood level reached and the time required to reach that level depend on the dose and the dosing interval. There are several potential problems inherent in multiple-dose therapy:

1. If the dosing interval is not appropriate for the biological half-life of the drug, large "peaks" and "valleys" in the drug blood level may result. For example, drugs with short half-lives require frequent dosings to maintain constant therapeutic levels.
2. The drug blood level may not be within the therapeutic range at sufficiently early times, an important consideration for certain disease states.
3. Patient noncompliance with the multiple-dosing regimen can result in failure of this approach.

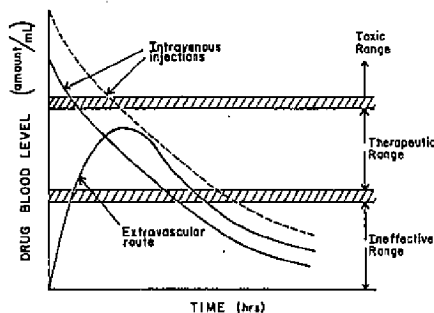


Fig 91-1. Typical drug blood level versus time profiles for intravenous injections and an extravascular route of administration.

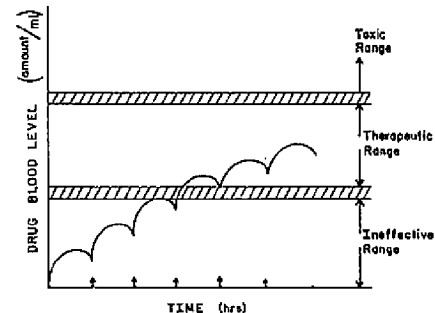


Fig 91-2. Typical drug blood level versus time profile following oral multiple-dose therapy.

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