

Novel dosage forms: current trends, challenges, and future perspectives in pharmaceutical sciences

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DOI: [https://doi.org/10.63001/tbs.2026.v21.i02.S.I\(2\).pp1859-1887](https://doi.org/10.63001/tbs.2026.v21.i02.S.I(2).pp1859-1887)

Keywords:

New dosage systems, personalized delivery of drugs, transdermal systems, 3D printing.

Received on:

31-05-2026

Accepted on:

20-06-2026

Published on:

30-06-2026

Abstract

The conventional drug delivery systems are severely restrained with poor bioavailability, inconsistent absorption, and patient non-compliance thereby spurring the innovation of novel doses forms to boost therapeutic results. This review gives a detailed discussion of the trends, technological developments and future trends in novel dosage forms. One of the systematic literature searches was devoted to the innovations in the design of formulations, their evaluation, and clinical uses. Orodispersible films, floating drug delivery systems, mucoadhesive formulations, nanoemulsions, transdermal patches using microneedles, and 3D-printed personalized dosage forms are examples of key developments with the support of nanotechnology, smart polymers, and artificial intelligence to produce controlled releases to achieve targeted release. These innovations are a paradigm shift of patient-centric and personalized therapy. Future outlooks include the incorporation of digital health technologies and massive manufacturing plans as well as regulatory harmonization to enhance faster clinical translation and commercialization.

Introduction

Innovations in drug delivery systems are one of the pillars of contemporary pharmaceutics because they guarantee treatment efficacy and patient adherence. Traditional dosage delivery techniques like pills,

capsules, and injections are popular with a number of constraints, which include, but are not limited to, poor bioavailability, dose dumping, repetitive delivery, and systemic adverse effects [1, 2]. Enhanced method of

drug delivery in the form of improved and more sophisticated approaches, as a result of which mediating and aimed therapeutic effects may be gained, has been pushed by these disadvantages [3]. Newer dosage delivery systems like nanoparticles, liposomes, transdermal systems, and oral thin film are new possibilities to overcome the limitations of traditional formulations [4, 5]. Besides improving the solubility and uptake, these types of systems can also be utilized to deliver a drug site-specifically with minimal systemic toxicity [6].

The necessity of innovative dosage forms is also determined by the rising number of chronic diseases that need long-term management, individual medicine, and the rising need to select non-invasive routes of administration [7]. Indicatively, transdermal drug delivery systems (TDDS) and mucoadhesive preparations have received much interest in enhancing patient compliance and decreasing gastrointestinal irritation [8]. In the same way, the nanocarrier-based systems have transformed oncology and CNS drugs delivery through enhancing bioavailability and targeting of action at the diseased locations [9, 10].

This review attempts to fully examine the current trends in novel dosage forms, their design mechanisms, technological innovations, and their therapeutic uses and discuss the major challenges and limitations related to their development [11]. Moreover, the paper has pointed out the regulatory implications and the future of adopting these innovations into the clinical practice [12-15].

2 Classification of Novel Dosage Forms

2.1 Solid Oral Novel Dosage Forms

2.1.1 Orodispersible Films (ODFs)

Orodispersible films are thin polymeric films that are strips that dissolve quickly on the tongue without the use of water and enhance adhesion in pediatrics, geriatrics, dysphagia, and on-the-go administration [16-18]. Modern ODFs leverage hydrophilic film formers (e.g., HPMC, pullulan), plasticizers (glycerol, PEG), and superdisintegrants to achieve sub-30-second disintegration while maintaining tensile integrity for packaging and handling [16, 17]. Drug loading is enabled via solution casting, hot-melt extrusion, or inkjet printing for dose personalization and combination therapy; permeation enhancers and taste-masking ion-exchange resins improve palatability and mucosal uptake [16-19]. Advances include nano-enabled ODFs (drug nanocrystals, polymeric nanoparticles, cyclodextrin inclusion) to elevate dissolution/supersaturation windows for BCS II-IV drugs and biologic actives (vaccines/enzymes) when stabilized with sugars and proteins [17-19]. Critical challenges are dose uniformity for potent drugs, moisture sensitivity, and scale-up rheology control; quality endpoints (disintegration, content uniformity, mechanical properties, residual solvents) are now well-standardized across pharmacopeial drafts and ICH-aligned QbD frameworks [16-18].

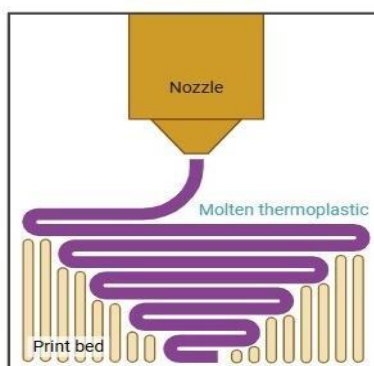


Fig. 1 FDM- Printed Orodispersible films

2.1.2 Floating Drug Delivery Systems (FDDS; gastro-retentive)

FDDS increase gastric residence time by reducing system density ($<1 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$) to remain buoyant on gastric fluid, thereby enhancing proximal-gut absorption for narrow-window drugs (e.g., riboflavin, levodopa), improving local treatment (*H. pylori*), and mitigating variability from rapid GI transit [20–22]. Formats include effervescent matrices (CO_2 generation from citric acid/sodium bicarbonate) and non-effervescent swellable/hydrodynamically balanced systems using gel-forming polymers (HPMC, carbomer) and oils [20, 22]. Design relies on buoyancy lag time, total buoyancy ($>8\text{--}12 \text{ h}$), in-vitro–in-vivo correlation (IVIVC) of gastric retention (gamma-scintigraphy), and control of food effects and posture [20–23]. Evolving gastro-retentive strategies—expandable/shape-memory and bioadhesive platforms—are increasingly combined with floating for robust retention under fed/fasted conditions [21, 23]. Limitations include interpatient

variability in motility (MMC phase III), risk of dose-dumping with alcohol/acidic co-ingestion, and swallowability of larger systems [20–22].

2.1.3 Effervescent Tablets

Effervescent tablets incorporate organic acids (citric, tartaric) and carbonates/bicarbonates to generate CO_2 on reconstitution, yielding fast dispersion, improved palatability, and high-dose delivery with reduced GI irritation for actives like NSAIDs and vitamins [24–26]. Process-critical aspects are moisture control (anhydrous processing, low-RH environments), granular flow, and rapid dissolution without insoluble residues; twin-screw continuous granulation and PAT have modernized manufacturability and robustness [26]. Clinically, effervescence can enhance onset via transient micro-mixing and favorable gastric emptying profiles; however, sodium load and dental enamel exposure require labeling and risk mitigation [24, 25].

Table 1

No.	Dosage Form Type	Drug / API	Key Technology / Materials	Purpose / Outcome	Reference
1	Orodispersible (ODF)	Film Rizatriptan	HPMC, glycerol	Rapid disintegration for migraine	27
2	Orodispersible Film	Montelukast	Pullulan, poloxamer	Pediatric-friendly dosing	28
3	Orodispersible Film	Donepezil	HPMC E15	Improved compliance in Alzheimer's	29
4	Orodispersible (ODT)	Tablet Olanzapine	MCC, crospovidone	Fast disintegration	30
5	ODT	Cetirizine	Mannitol, croscarmellose	Pediatric antihistamine	31
6	Floating Tablet (FDDS)	Metformin	HPMC K100M, sodium bicarbonate	Gastric retention	32

7	Floating Matrix Tablet	Propranolol	Carbopol, citric acid	Controlled release	gastric	33
8	Gastro-Retentive Expandable System	Levodopa	Shape-memory polymer	Prolonged residence	gastric	34
9	Bioadhesive GR System	Amoxicillin	Carbomer, chitosan	H. pylori eradication		35
10	Effervescent Tablet	Vitamin C	Citric acid + bicarbonate	Rapid dissolution		36
11	Effervescent Tablet	Diclofenac	Tartaric acid, sodium carbonate	Better GI tolerability		37
12	Osmotic Pump Tablet	Nifedipine (Procardia XL)	Laser-drilled orifice, cellulose acetate	Zero-order release		38
13	Osmotic Pump (Push–Pull)	Glipizide (GITS)	Osmogens, hydrophilic polymer	Once-daily release		39
14	3D-Printed Tablet (SLS)	Levetiracetam (Spritam®)	ZipDose technology	Ultra-rapid disintegration		40
15	3D-Printed Polypill	Multidrug combo	FDM printing	Personalized therapy		41
16	Mini-Tablets (2–3 mm)	Lansoprazole	Enteric polymer	Pediatric & geriatric swallowing ease		42
17	Multiparticulates (Pellets)	Omeprazole MUPS	Sugar spheres, enteric coat	Acid protection		43
18	Matrix Tablet (Controlled release)	Tramadol	HPMC matrix	24-h release		44
19	Solid Dispersion Tablet	Itraconazole	PVP-VA, HPMCAS	↑ Solubility for BCS II drug		45
20	Amorphous Solid Dispersion (ASD)	Tacrolimus	Soluplus, PVP	Improved dissolution		46
21	Mucoadhesive Buccal Tablet	Propranolol	Carbopol, HPMC	Avoids first-pass metabolism		47
22	Oral Thin Matrix Strip (Buccal)	Fentanyl	Mucoadhesive polymer	Rapid uptake	systemic	48
23	Nanocrystal-Based Tablet	Sirolimus	Nano-milled API + MCC	↑ Dissolution		49
24	Enteric-Coated Tablet	Mesalamine	Eudragit S100	Colon targeting		50

25	Colon-Targeted Compression-Coated Tablet	Prednisolone	Guar gum coat	Time-dependent release	51
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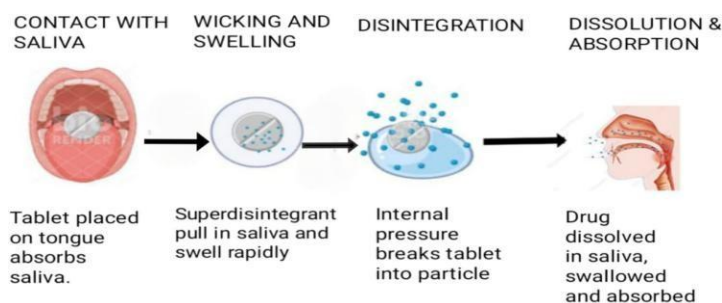


Fig. 2 Mechanism of disintegration and drug release of an Orally Disintegrating Tablet following contact with saliva

2.2 Liquid Novel Dosage Forms

2.2.1 Nanoemulsions

Nanoemulsions (20–200 nm) are kinetically stable O/W or W/O dispersions stabilized by surfactant/co-surfactant systems (e.g., SMEDDS/SEDDS variants), delivering poorly soluble drugs with improved dissolution, lymphatic uptake, and reduced first-pass metabolism [52–56]. High-energy (high-pressure homogenization, ultrasonication) and low-energy (phase inversion, spontaneous emulsification) methods are selected based on API solubility, interfacial curvature, and scalability constraints [52–54]. Contemporary work emphasizes biological fate (protein corona, mucus transport), in-situ gelling nanoemulsions for mucosa/ocular routes, and transdermal/follicular targeting via droplet deformability [54–56]. Key CMC/QbD levers include droplet size/PDI, interfacial tension, Ostwald ripening control (oil selection, ripening inhibitors), and digestion-informed in-vitro lipolysis tests to predict oral bioavailability [53, 54].

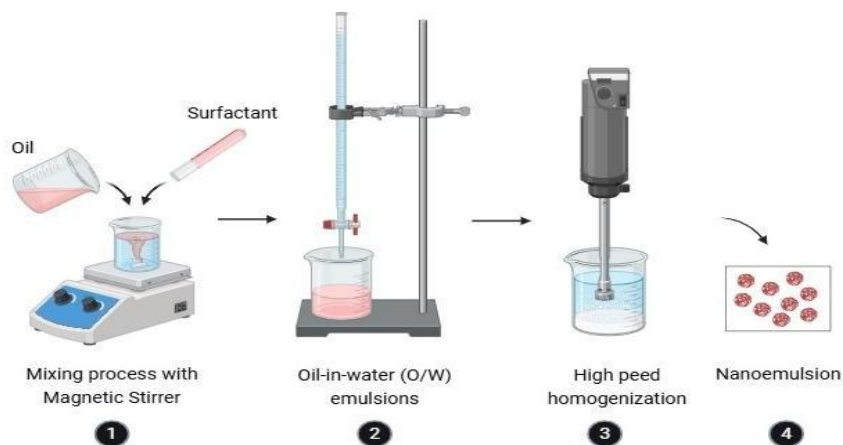


Fig. 3 Nanoemulsion as liquid novel dosage forms: preparation by high – energy emulsification techniques

2.2.2 Lipid-Based Systems (LBDDS; SLN/NLC, SEDDS/SMEDDS, liposomes)

LBDDS encompass colloidal carriers and self-emulsifying systems that solubilize lipophilic APIs in digestible oils/surfactants to enhance intestinal solubilization and promote lymphatic transport [53, 57-59]. Solid lipid nanoparticles (SLN) and nanostructured lipid carriers (NLC) provide solid/semi-solid lipid matrices enabling controlled release, chemical protection, and high physical stability; however, crystallinity and polymorphic transitions can expel drugs—addressed by mixing

solid/liquid lipids (NLC) and using functional surfactants [57-59]. For oral SEDDS/SMEDDS, digestion-dependent supersaturation and precipitation inhibition (polymer precipitation inhibitors) are pivotal to translation; biorelevant lipolysis assays coupled with in-silico PBPK models are now standard for developability assessment [53, 58]. Emerging directions include surface-engineered LNPs for tissue targeting and mRNA/protein delivery, bridging pharmaceuticals with nanomedicine [60].

Table 2

No.	Drug / API	Liquid Novel Dosage Form	Key Excipients	Purpose / Outcome	Reference
1	Curcumin	Nanoemulsion	Capryol 90, Tween 80	↑ Oral bioavailability	61
2	Vitamin D3	Nanoemulsion	Polysorbate 80	Improved absorption	62
3	Ibuprofen	Nanoemulsion	MCT oil, Cremophor RH40	Faster dissolution	63
4	Clotrimazole	Nanoemulsion Gel (liquid–gel)	Labrasol, Oleic acid	↑ Dermal permeation	64
5	Paclitaxel	Nanoemulsion (IV)	Soybean oil, Lecithin	Cancer delivery	65
6	Coenzyme Q10	Self-emulsifying drug delivery system (SEDDS)	MCT oil, Tween 80	Lymphatic transport	66
7	Fenofibrate	SEDDS	Labrasol, Transcutol	↑ Solubilization	67
8	Cyclosporine A	SMEDDS	Cremophor RH40	Increased oral absorption	68
9	Ritonavir	SMEDDS (liquid capsule)	Capmul MCM, Kolliphor EL	↑ Bioavailability	69
10	Carvedilol	SEDDS	Peceol, Tween 80	Fast dissolution	70

11	Rifampicin	Nanoemulsion (oral)	Labrafac PG, Tween 20	Anti-TB enhancement	71
12	Resveratrol	Nanoemulsion	Miglyol 812, Tween 80	↑ Stability	72
13	Omega-3 Fatty acids	Nanoemulsion	Fish oil, Lecithin	High stability	73
14	Nifedipine	SMEDDS	Capryol 90, PEG 400	↑ Oral bioavailability	74
15	Dexamethasone	Liposomes (liquid suspension)	Phosphatidylcholine	Ocular delivery	75
16	Amphotericin B	Liposomal dispersion (Ambisome)	HSPC, Cholesterol	↓ Nephrotoxicity	76
17	mRNA	Lipid nanoparticles (LNPs) – liquid dispersion	Ionizable lipid, PEG-lipid	Vaccine delivery	77
18	Doxorubicin	Polymeric nanosuspension (liquid)	PLGA, Poloxamer	Controlled release	78
19	Ketoconazole	Microemulsion	Isopropyl myristate, Tween 80	Antifungal efficacy	79
20	Insulin	Nanomicelles (liquid)	PEG-PLA, Poloxamer	Oral peptide delivery	80

2.3 Semi-Solid Novel Dosage Forms

2.3.1 Gels and Hydrogels

Hydrogels are 3D hydrophilic networks (covalent or physical crosslinks) with high water content that enable local depot formation, sustained release, and stimuli-responsive delivery (pH, temperature, enzymes, redox) [81-84]. In situ-forming systems (thermo-gelation of poloxamers/PLGA-PEG-PLGA; ion-activated alginate; solvent-exchange NMP/PLGA implants) provide minimally invasive administration and conformal filling of complex anatomical spaces [83, 85]. Release mechanisms are governed by

swelling-controlled diffusion, mesh size, and degradation kinetics; for bioactives (proteins/cells), mild gelation and affinity interactions (heparin-mimetic, host-guest cyclodextrin) maintain stability and spatiotemporal control [81-84]. Clinical translation focuses on post-surgical local therapy, ocular/periodontal depots, and intra-articular disease modifiers, with attention to injectability, sterilization resilience, and extractables/leachables [84, 85].

2.3.2 Mucoadhesive Formulations

Mucoadhesive dosage forms (buccal, nasal, vaginal, ocular, GI) prolong residence time via interfacial interactions (hydrogen bonding, electrostatics, interpenetration) between polymers (carbomers, chitosan, thiomers) and mucins, improving absorption of short-window and labile drugs [86-90]. Modern design integrates rheology-based adhesion metrics,

mucin-polymer complexation, and particle engineering (mucoadhesive vs mucopenetrating surfaces) to balance retention with permeation [86-88]. Buccal films/tablets and ocular inserts exemplify successful translation; limitations include mucus turnover, variability in mucin glycosylation, and potential irritation with cationic polymers—addressed through degree-of-deacetylation control and thiolation strategies [86-90].

Table 3

No.	Form / Type	API / Payload	Key Polymers / Materials	Novel Feature / Purpose	Reference
1	Injectable thermosensitive hydrogel	Ovalbumin (vaccine)	PLGA-PEG-PLGA	Depot formation for sustained antigen release	91
2	Injectable thermoresponsive hydrogel	Bevacizumab (Avastin)	PLGA-PEG-PLGA	Sustained intravitreal release in eye	92
3	Thermosensitive hydrogel for neurotherapy	Dexamethasone + Ketorolac + Antioxidants	PLGA-PEG-PLGA	Long-term intraretinal delivery for retinal degeneration	93
4	Ocular in situ thermo-gelling gel	Hydrocortisone	Poloxamer (F127, F68) + Hyaluronic acid	Thermo-reversible, mucoadhesive for eye drops	94
5	Ocular in situ gel (thermo + muco)	Moxifloxacin HCl	Poloxamer 407/188 + xanthan gum or sodium alginate	Longer precorneal residence, bioadhesion	95
6	In-situ muco-thermogel	Opiorphin (peptide)	Poloxamer 407 + Carbopol 934P (+ chitosan/HPMC)	Nasal extended delivery via liposomal hydrogel	96
7	Intranasal thermosensitive gel	Rasagiline mesylate	Poloxamer 407 + Poloxamer 188 + Carbopol 934P or Chitosan	Improved brain uptake (nose-to-brain)	97

8	Nanoparticle-loaded thermosensitive gel (nasal)	Chlorpheniramine maleate	Chitosan-NPs + P407 + Carbopol 934P	Increased residence, enhanced absorption	nasal	98
9	Intranasal in-situ thermogel	Zolmitriptan	Chitosan nanoparticles + Poloxamer 407/188	Migraine delivery, rapid onset + sustained release		99
10	Thermosensitive in-situ gel for nasal wound	Tranexamic Acid	Chitosan Poloxamer	+ Gelation in nasal cavity, wound healing in epistaxis		100
11	Mucoadhesive thermosensitive nasal gel	Sumatriptan	Pluronic F-127 Chitosan	+ Prolonged retention, improved absorption	nasal	101
12	Nasal in-situ gel (Alzheimer's drug)	Tacrine	Poloxamer F-127	Increased residence-time, brain delivery	nasal	102
13	Thermosensitive intranasal gel (psychiatric)	Risperidone	Poloxamer 407 HPMC + Chitosan	+ Nose-to-brain delivery, mucoadhesive gel		103
14	Thermosensitive intranasal gel (chitosan / guanidine)	— (model system)	Guanidine-chitosan + Poloxamer 407/188	Enhanced penetration, optimized gelling temp		104
15	In-situ gel (nasal) for analgesic peptide	Morphine	Chitosan- β -glycerophosphate hydrogel	Fast analgesic effect + prolonged retention		105
16	Mucoadhesive antimicrobial vaginal gel	Chitosan (antifungal action)	Chitosan + HPMC	Vaginal candidiasis treatment, mucoadhesive action		106
17	Thermo + pH responsive (generic drug)		Poly(N-isopropylacrylamide) (PNIPA)	Thermo-triggered collapse/growth		107

	hydrogel (stimuli-responsive)			for controlled release	
18	Nanocomposite thermosensitive / stimulus-responsive hydrogel	(model / general)	Polysaccharide-clay, magnetic ferrogel	Remote (magnetic) triggered drug release	108
19	Self-healing hydrogel for drug delivery	(generic)	Self-healing polymer network	Self-repairing gel matrix enabling smart release	109
20	Injectable composite hydrogel with shape recovery	Therapeutic agents / cells	RBC-derived biocomposite, PEG, hydrogel matrix	Compressible injection, shape recovery after syringe	110
21	Muco-thermoresponsive hydrogel with HA	Acyclovir	Poloxamer + Hyaluronic acid	Thermoreversible + mucoadhesive for topical delivery	111
22	Ion-activated in-situ gel	(e.g., nasal)	Gellan gum (ion-sensitive polymer)	Gelation triggered by cations, long retention	112
23	Dual-stimuli responsive hydrogel	Berberine chloride	Gelatin / perfluorohexane core-shell	pH + ultrasound triggered release	113
24	Photocrosslinked hydrogel	Peptides proteins	/ Thiol-ene collagen-PEG network	Injectable, controlled network by light-triggered crosslinking	114
25	Self-healing injectable hydrogel for cells/drugs	Therapeutic biomolecules or cells	8-arm PEG, dynamic covalent or physical crosslinks	Self-repair, minimally invasive injection	115

2.4 Transdermal Systems

2.4.1 Patches

Transdermal patches introduce drugs deep into the stratum corneum to the systemic circulation, providing constant plasma levels, first pass bypass, and enhanced compliance with intractable chronic treatment [116-119]. Designs of today consist of drug-in-adhesive matrices, reservoir and multi-layer designs with permeation enhancers (fatty acids, terpenes, iontophoresis/thermal ablation adjuncts) and handle adhesive cold-flow, crystallization risk, and dose dumping [116-118]. The regulatory requirements focus on adhesive performance (peel /tack/shear), in vitro skin permeation (human/porcine), in vivo PK bioequivalence, and extractable/leachable safety of acrylate/silicone backings [117-119]. New directions use patches in combination with digital adherence sensing and on-skin micro heaters to control flux on command [116, 119].

Microneedles (solid, coated, dissolving, hollow) generate temporary microchannels to penetrate the stratum corneum painlessly to deliver small molecules, biologics, and vaccines with a reduced cold-chain load and with the potential of selfadministration [116, 120-122]. Examples include metals, silicon and dissolving polymers (PVP, PVA, carboxymethylcellulose, hyaluronate) that are capable of stabilizing delicate cargos; successful performance depends on the force with which it can be inserted, sharpness of the tip, mechanical strength and kinetics of dissolution [120-122]. Clinical candidates are influenza, measles-rubella and COVID-19, small molecule and peptide systemic delivery, large molecule dose loading limits, scalable manufacturing (molding/3D printing), and demographic reproducible skin insertion [120-122].

2.4.2 Microneedle-Based Delivery

Table 4

No.	Form / Type	API / Payload	Key Polymers / Materials	Novel Feature / Purpose	Ref.
1	Transdermal Patch – Drug-in-Adhesive	Nicotine	Acrylate pressure-sensitive adhesive, polyethylene backing	Steady plasma delivery for smoking cessation; avoids first-pass metabolism	123, 124
2	Transdermal Patch – Reservoir System	Fentanyl	EVA membrane, silicone adhesive	High-potency opioid delivery with controlled membrane-regulated release	123, 125
3	Transdermal Patch – Multilayer / Heat-Assisted	Lidocaine – Tetracaine	+ Silicone adhesive, occlusive backing, integrated heating element	Self-contained micro-heater enhances permeation for local analgesia	123, 126
4	Transdermal Patch with Permeation Enhancers	Estradiol	Polyacrylate adhesive + fatty acid enhancer	Enhanced percutaneous flux for hormone therapy	124

5	Digital-Enabled Transdermal Patch	Rivastigmine	Acrylic smart module	adhesive, sensor	Integration of adherence monitoring + controlled heat pulses	125
6	Dissolving Microneedles	Influenza vaccine antigen (HA)	PVP, PVA		Needle-free vaccination; improved stability at room temperature	127, 128
7	Solid Microneedles Coated	Measles–Rubella vaccine	Stainless steel coated with stabilizing sugars	MN with	Rapid antigen release; reduced cold-chain requirement	127, 129
8	Hollow Microneedles	Insulin	Silicon / hollow arrays	metal	Precise bolus delivery for diabetic patients; minimal pain	128
9	Polymeric Dissolvable Microneedles	Desmopressin	Hyaluronic CMC	acid,	Enhanced systemic delivery of peptides with rapid dissolution	127
10	3D-Printed Microneedles	Small-molecule drugs (e.g., caffeine, metformin)	Photopolymerizable resins		Customizable geometry, scalable manufacturing	129

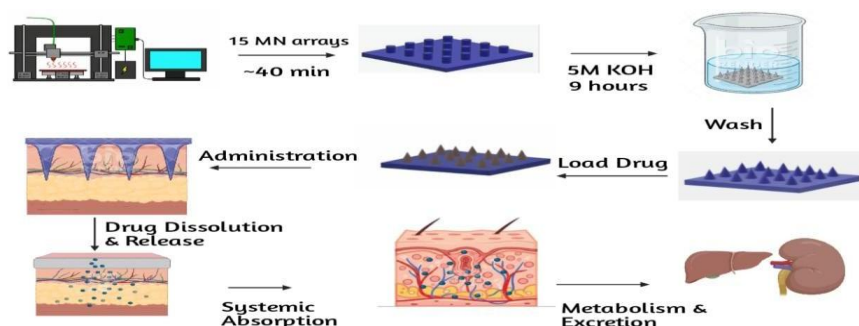


Fig. 4 Fabrication of microneedle (MN) arrays via 3D printing, post-processing with KOH treatment, drug loading, and subsequent transdermal drug delivery leading to systemic absorption, metabolism, and excretion

3 Recent Technological Advancements

3.1 3D Printing for Personalized Dosage Forms

Additive manufacturing, or three-dimensional (3D) printing has transformed the way pharmaceutical products are produced by providing the possibility to create personal dosage forms with a high degree of precision. In contrast to traditional manufacturing processes, 3D printing could be used to deposit materials in layer-by-layer to design drug products with unique shapes, sizes, and drug release patterns. Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM), Inkjet Printing,

and Stereolithography (SLA) are the most common techniques that are used in formulating drugs. These technologies enable personalized dosing to patients, combination of different drugs in one unit and controlled release of drugs. The 3D-printed drug Spritam 100mg (levetiracetam) became the first FDA-approved drug, the result of which proved that this method could be effective in rapid disintegration and loading drugs with high doses [130, 131].

4D PRINTING TECHNIQUES

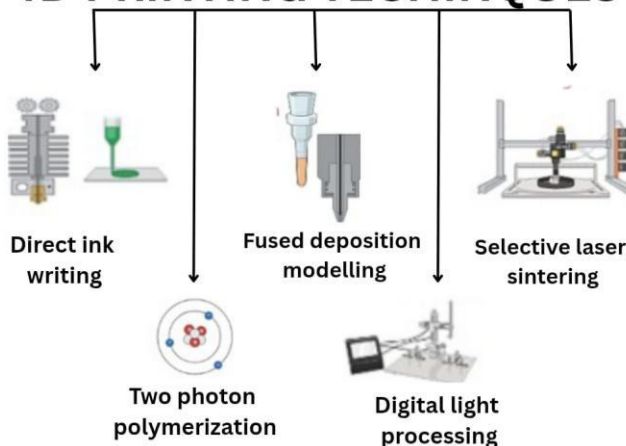


Fig. 5 4D Printing techniques

The recent research aims at developing better polymers to be used as pharmaceutical grade, temperature sensitive materials and bio-based excipients to improve their stability and biocompatibility. More so, the 3D printing

developments have seen the introduction of 4D printing that uses smart materials triggered by environmental conditions such as temperature, pH, and moisture to add dynamism into drug delivery [132-134].

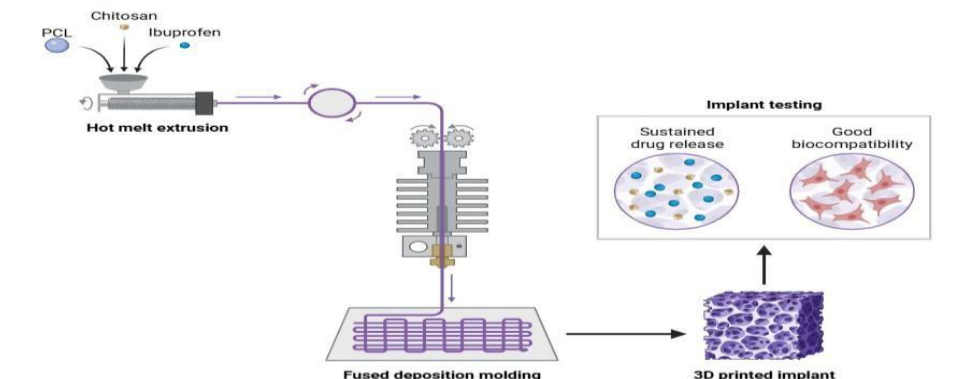


Fig. 6 3D – printed implant via hot-melt extrusion

3.2 Smart Drug Delivery Systems (pH-sensitive, Temperature-responsive)

Smart drug delivery systems have become a new development in targeted drug delivery. Examples of this kind of system are pH-sensitive polymers (e.g., Eudragit 5, poly (methacrylic acid)) in oral delivery systems, targeting the gastrointestinal tract, in which coliform-specific delivery can be achieved by oral delivery [135, 136].

Temperature responsive hydrogels like poly (Nisopropylacrylamide) (PNIPAAm) have temperature-dependent transitions of sol-gel reaction that allows controlled and sustained delivery of drugs. Recent applications have been of dual-stimuli-responsive systems (pH and temperature combined), which provide more accuracy in the specific delivery of drugs in cancer therapy and chronic inflammatory diseases [137, 138].

3.3 Use of AI and Machine Learning in Formulation Development

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) has changed the pharmaceutical formulation development process through predictive modeling, optimizing processes, and virtual screening of excipients. The technologies play a great role in minimizing time and cost involved during drug development. Neural networks, decision trees, and support vector machine AI algorithms are used to forecast key parameters of the formulation (dissolution rate, stability, and bioavailability) using experimental and historical data [139, 140].

AI-based system can help formulate patient-specific dosage formulations, ratios, and forecast drug-excipient interactions, which expedite formulation screening and reduce experimental analyses. Moreover, continuous manufacturing systems can be supported by machine learning algorithms that operate with real-time manufacturing data in order to optimize processes constantly to maintain quality according to quality by design (QbD) standards [141, 142].

Table 5

No.	Technology / Category	Example / Product / Study	Key Components	Materials	Novel Feature / Purpose	Ref.
1	3D Printing (FDM)	<i>Spritam</i> [®] (<i>Levetiracetam</i>) – first FDA-approved 3D-printed drug	Binder-jet using excipients	3D printing water-soluble	High-dose loading, ultra-fast disintegration	143, 144
2	3D Printing (SLA)	3D-printed gastroretentive floating tablets	Photopolymerizable resins, PEG-DA		Customized geometry, extended gastric retention	145
3	4D Printing (Stimuli-Responsive Tablets)	Shape-changing 4D printed oral dosage forms	Smart polymers (cellulose derivatives, hydrogels)		Respond to pH / water to alter shape and release	146, 147
4	pH-Sensitive Delivery	Colon-targeted budesonide tablets using Eudragit [®] polymers	Eudragit [®] S100 / L100		Drug release only at colonic pH	148

5	Temperature-Responsive Hydrogel	PNIPAAm-based injectable hydrogel for cancer therapy	PNIPAAm, chitosan, PEG	Sol-gel transition at 32°C for localized release	144
6	Dual Stimuli System (pH + Temperature)	Smart nano-hydrogel for targeted tumor release	PNIPAAm + methacrylic acid copolymers	Highly specific drug release in tumor microenvironment	147
7	AI Formulation Design	Neural-network prediction of tablet dissolution rate	ANN models trained on formulation datasets	Reduces lab experiments; predicts release profiles	148
8	AI for Polymer Optimization	ML model optimizing polymer ratios in sustained-release tablets	Random forest + DoE datasets	Predicts optimal polymer combinations	145
9	AI in Continuous Manufacturing	Real-time controlled continuous tablet line	PAT sensors + ML feedback algorithms	Enables real-time QbD compliance	148

4 Challenges in Development

Novel dosage forms have a number of challenges that restrain their extensive use although these are therapeutically advantageous. Issues of stability are one of the main concerns and have a considerable impact on the shelf life and bioavailability of the final product. Physical and chemical instability in the storage of formulations containing biologics, nanoparticles, or hydrophilic polymer may occur as a result of moisture absorption, crystallization, or degradation of active pharmaceutical ingredient (APIs) [149]. As an example, lipid-based nanoparticle-based drug delivery systems are very susceptible to oxidative degradation, which causes loss of efficacy of the drug [150]. Moreover, peptides and protein preparations may have strict storage requirements, e.g. cold chain logistics to preserve their integrity [151].

Scalability is another important challenge to manufacture. In spite of the evidences of great potential in the field of personalized medicine, the use of technologies such as 3D printing and microfabrication in mass production is not as common as it could be [152]. Complexity of the process

involved in making the exact structure to be used in controlling drug release at an industrial level poses high production costs and long processing time [153]. Besides, it is challenging to preserve the batch-to-batch consistency of new systems like nanoparticles or microneedle arrays because processing parameters used are quite complicated [154]. These restrict the commercialization and large-scale clinical utilization.

Another significant obstacle to novel dosage form development in regulatory challenges. The existing regulatory systems are mainly structured to address traditional dosage delivery methods, and hence do not have any standardized practices regarding emerging technologies, like 3D printing, nanomedicine, and smart drug delivery systems [155]. To prove their safety, efficacy, and quality, developers will need to perform a significant amount of preclinical and clinical testing, which is time-consuming and requires a greater amount of financial resources [156]. Moreover, new excipients and new manufacturing processes will also not be approved without a whole lot of toxicological and stability data, and this further postpones market entry [157]. There is a need to

harmonize the international regulatory standards of advanced drug delivery systems to increase the rate of innovation and guarantee patient safety [158].

5 Clinical Applications and Market Trends

5.1 Recent FDA/EMA Approvals of Novel Dosage Forms

Changes in the regulatory environment of novel dosage forms have been experienced in the recent years, which focus on the patient-centric design, improved compliance, and clinical outcomes. Various new formulations that overcome the constraints of traditional dosage forms have been approved by regulatory bodies (e.g. the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA)).

5.1.2 Intranasal Delivery Systems

Another of the most prominent approvals is the nasal spray of epinephrine (neffy ®), an anaphylaxis management device to provide the user with an option to avoid using needles. This formulation was approved by the FDA in 2024 and enhances patient convenience and compliance, particularly in people who are needle-phobic. Nares systems circumvent the first-pass metabolism and promote quick absorption across the nasal mucosa, thus a perfect choice when using an emergency therapy [159].

There is also the FDA that has given more approval to using influenza vaccines (FluMist, 2004) at home as a form of administering vaccinations, a paradigm shift in delivering vaccinations. This is a deliberate measure to improve accessibility as well as meet the objectives of mass immunization and pandemic preparedness in the public health [160].

5.1.2 Subcutaneous (SC) Formulations of Monoclonal Antibodies

The subcutaneous (SC) administration of drugs that were formerly administered intravenously (IV) is a trend that keeps picking up. To give an example, nivolumab (Opdivo®) was given a FDA approval of fixed-dose SC formulation in late 2024. In the same manner, the EMA granted atezolizumab (Tecentriq®) SC administration in indications of oncology with an impressive reduction in infusion time and utilization of health care resources [161, 162].

5.1.3 Long-Acting Injectables (LAIs)

The EMA gave a positive opinion to lenacapavir which is an injectable to be used twice per year to treat. As a significant breakthrough in HIV treatment, HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) was created [163]. With such LAIs, there is a decrease in the frequency of dose (daily to less). Biannual periods, the presence of non-adherence problems in the management of chronic disease.

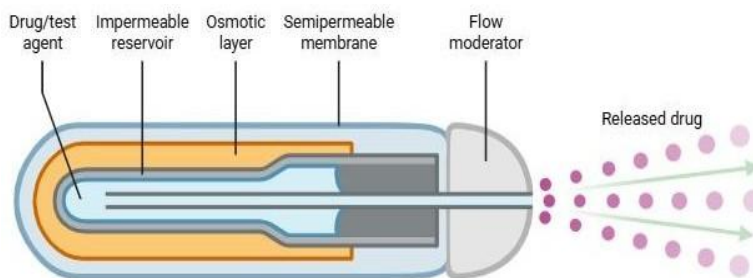


Fig. 7 Long acting injectable using osmotic pump mechanism

5.2 Global Market Analysis

The novel dosage forms market is undergoing a vigorous development, which is triggered by technological innovation, convenience of patients, and demand of individualized medicine.

5.2.1 Long-Acting Injectables

In 2023, the global LAI market can be estimated to USD 26.3 billion and will increase at a compound

annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12-13% as of 2030. This is mainly owed to the growing use of LAIs in psychiatry, endocrinology, and prevention of infectious diseases [164].

5.2.2 Intranasal Drug Delivery

There has been a growth in the need of intranasal formulations, and it is projected to grow even more due to the increased approvals of needle-free emergency drugs and immunizations. The intranasal drug delivery market is projected to expand gradually around the world due to the preference of the patient and avoidance of hepatic metabolism [165].

5.2.3 3D-Printed Dosage Forms

Application of 3D printing in pharmaceuticals is still in the infancy phase but has a potential of growth especially in personalized treatment. The 3D-printed drug market in the world is expected to have USD 0.43-0.79 billion in 2035 with a midteen CAGR growth driven by the innovativeness in the additive manufacturing field and regulatory acceptance after the approval of Spitam® [166, 167].

6 Future Perspectives

6.1 Integration with Digital Health Technologies

It is expected that by integrating new dosage forms with digital health technologies, the patient care will be different as it will allow implementing the concept of precision medicine and real-time therapeutic monitoring. A system of smart drug delivery with sensors and wireless communication devices enables constant control of physiological indicators and compliance with medication. An example of such integration, approved by the FDA to treat psychiatric disorders, is the use of digital pills, which are pharmacotherapy combined with ingestible sensors that transmit adherence data to mobile applications [168, 169]. Smart devices that are linked to controlled-release systems allow maximizing the dose according

to patient-specific requirements, minimizing side effects and maximizing effectiveness. Moreover, AI algorithms and cloud-based systems are used to analyze patient data obtained through these systems to enable a data-oriented decision-making process and individualized treatment plans [170, 171]. Such a merger between the pharmaceutical and digital health is consistent with the increasing demand toward telemedicine and remote patient management, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic [172, 173].

6.2 Role of 4D Printing and Nanotechnology

The latest development of 3D printing is 4D printing that is an improvement that incorporates smart materials that can change shape, properties, or functionality with time in response to external stimuli like temperature, pH, light [174]. In drug delivery, 4D-printed dosage designs will be able to change their release kinetics according to physiological circumstances, which will guarantee accurate therapeutic results [175, 176]. As an example, shape-shifting oral pills had been developed to give the site-specific release and localized drug delivery, which have greatly enhanced patient compliance [177]. Nanotechnology also augments these innovations because it allows precise and specific drug delivery using nanoparticles, nanomicelles, and dendrimers that enhance the solubility, stability, and bioavailability of drugs with low solubility [178, 179]. Nanotechnology, together with 4D printing, can yield smart drug delivery systems that can react to environmental factors and deliver therapeutics with the accuracy never before seen [180]. Such innovations will likely dominate the future of customized medicine, regeneration therapies, and the management of chronic diseases [181, 182]. These futuristic dosage forms will require regulatory systems and scalable production plans to become a successful commercialization and broaden clinical use [183].

Table 6

No.	Category	Example Technology	/	Key Components / Materials	Novel Feature / Future Advantage	Ref.
1	Digital Health Integration	FDA-approved digital pill for psychiatric disorders (<i>aripiprazole with ingestible sensor</i>)		Ingestible sensor (silicon–magnesium–copper), wearable patch, smartphone app	Enables real-time adherence monitoring and personalized therapy	184-186
2	Digital Health Integration	Wearable-linked controlled-release systems		Wearable biosensors, microprocessors, polymeric CR systems	Dynamic dosing based on physiological data (HR, glucose, motion)	187-189
3	AI-Enhanced Remote Monitoring	Cloud-AI platforms analyzing adherence and physiological data		Cloud servers, algorithms, wireless telemetry	AI/ML wireless Real-time data interpretation for precision medicine	190-192
4	Telemedicine-Drug Delivery Convergence	Remote-adjustable drug delivery platforms		IoT sensors, app-based feedback loops	Supports remote care, highly relevant post-COVID	193-195
5	4D Printing	Shape-shifting tablets for site-specific release		Smart polymers (cellulose derivatives, hydrogels, SMPs)	Tablets change shape or function in response to pH/temperature	196, 197
6	4D Printing	4D-printed responsive oral systems		Thermo-responsive, pH-re		198, 199

7 Conclusion

The history of the development of innovative dosage forms has fundamentally altered the pharmaceutical sciences by increasing the effectiveness of the drugs, enhancing their adherence to the patient and personalized medicine. These novel systems, controlled-release formulations, orally disintegrating tablets, transdermal patches, 3D/4D printing dosage forms, and nanotechnology-based systems, deal with major drawbacks that are inherent to the conventional dosage forms, including low bioavailability, inconvenience to the patient, and unreliable therapeutic effects. In spite of these advantages, there

are still various challenges such as high costs of manufacture, complicated regulatory routes, stability issues and absence of scalability with large scale production. Additionally, clinical testing of novel technologies, including nanocarriers, smart polymers, bioprinted dosage forms, needs strict clinical testing.

The new trends in the field focus on adopting digital health technologies, smart sensors, and connected devices to monitor drug therapy in real-time and implementing 4D printing and nanotechnology to develop precision medicine. Interdisciplinary work by researchers, regulatory bodies, and business stakeholders will be necessary to address present

obstacles and shorten the clinical adoption process of these technologies. Finally, although innovative dosage forms offer unprecedented opportunities to transform the delivery of drug and patient-centered care, they will need to be balanced through regulatory measures, technological innovations, and cost-efficient production models.

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