



## Healthcare Packaging Trends: Prioritizing Safety, Convenience, Sustainability and Technology

Healthcare packaging plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety, efficacy, and compliance of medical products. As the industry continues to evolve, so do the demands placed on packaging solutions. Here are some key trends shaping the future of healthcare packaging:

### Sustainability

Sustainability has become a major focus across all industries, and pharmaceutical packaging is no exception. Consumers are increasingly demanding products that are produced and packaged in an environmentally responsible manner, leading to a growing emphasis on biodegradable and recyclable packaging materials, and reduced packaging waste.

Packaging surveys have even highlighted that one in five consumers would refuse to buy from retailers that did not use sustainable packaging.

Businesses should therefore prioritise finding cost-effective ways to improve sustainability in line with this increased customer awareness of and demand for green packaging.

### Examples of green healthcare packaging:

- Biodegradable blister packs: These packs are made from materials that decompose naturally, reducing their environmental impact.
- Recyclable paperboard cartons: These cartons can be recycled into new paper products.
- Reduced packaging materials: Minimise the amount of packaging used in order to conserve resources.
- Shift from traditional expanded polystyrene to wool-pack insulation: this reduces the environmental impact of insulated packaging.

Returnable packaging is also likely to grow in popularity. In view of the pressures being imposed by new legislation and increasing costs, 2025 could be the year when many businesses explore the potential of returnable packaging.

### Smart packaging

Another significant healthcare trend is the integration of technology into packaging solutions. Smart packaging – QR codes, RFID tags, tamper-evident seals, and even blockchain technology – can enhance product traceability, authenticity, and patient adherence.

Connected and interactive packaging – in other words, technologically-enhanced packaging that offers additional features and functionality – is now being more widely used. 2025 could be the year that this kind of packaging finally goes mainstream. QR codes offer numerous ways in which businesses can enhance packaging; interactive packs can help increase consumer engagement and drive loyalty, by providing services such as easy access to online instruction manuals, additional information and product updates, and links to buy related products.

### Examples:

- QR codes can provide patients with access to important product information such as instructions for use and side effects.

- RFID tags can track products through the supply chain, helping to prevent counterfeiting and ensure authenticity.
- Tamper-evident seals can indicate whether a product has been tampered with, guaranteeing product safety and providing patients with peace of mind.
- Blockchain technology can be used to manage medicines and medical devices across the supply chain and into patient records, in order to ensure the traceability of products.

### Safety and compliance

It is necessary to ensure the safety and compliance of medical products, so this remains a top priority for healthcare providers and manufacturers. This includes adherence to stringent regulations, such as FDA and GMP guidelines, as well as the use of packaging solutions that meet specific standards for safety, labelling, and child resistance. As well as protecting the integrity of the product, these guidelines protect the business, the consumer, and the environment.

Key points on this topic include: Material Safety, Labelling Compliance, Structural Integrity, Environmental Compliance, Product Specific Safety Standards, Transportation & Logistics Safety, and Employee & Consumer Safety.

By following these safety and compliance measures, businesses are able to ensure the safe handling, transport, and consumption of medical products while meeting industry standards and legal requirements.

### **Examples:**

Child-resistant closures make it difficult for children to open medication containers, preventing accidental ingestion.

Tamper-evident packaging can help keep counterfeit medications out of the supply chain.

Clear, easy-to-read labelling ensures that patients receive the correct medication and dosage.

### **Other emerging trends**

In addition to these key trends, other emerging areas of focus in healthcare packaging include:

Patient-centric design: Packaging is increasingly designed with patient needs in mind. Accessible features include easy-open containers (where child-resistant closures are not required), clear labelling, and Braille labelling for visually impaired patients.

Supply chain efficiency: Optimised packaging solutions can help reduce costs and improve supply chain operations. This includes factors such as packaging size and materials.

Medication adherence: Packaging can be designed to improve medication adherence, with features such as reminder labels and patient education materials.

Inclusive packaging: Inclusive packaging can embrace diversity and social responsibility by aligning with customer values and beliefs. Ethically sourced materials, branding that represents diverse demographics, and genuine transparency from businesses are likely to become increasingly important.

As healthcare providers and manufacturers continue to prioritise patient safety, convenience and sustainability, packaging will play an increasingly important role in achieving these goals.

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**Lydia van der Meulen**  
Client Partner – Global Head of Life Sciences & Healthcare Practice Group

[LinkedIn profile](#)



**Elisa Martinez de Miguel**  
Senior Consultant

[LinkedIn profile](#)