



# A Comprehensive Review of Controlled Drug Release Delivery Systems: Current Status and Future Directions

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## ABSTRACT

Controlled-release systems regulate drug plasma concentration after administration through pre determined patterns over a fixed period. The release rate should determine drug absorption and concentration. These formulations reduce daily dosing frequency. This article discusses ideal requirements, advantages, properties, and approaches for developing controlled-release formulations to improve drug delivery. This involves delivering drugs at a pre-set rate for a limited period, either locally or systemically. This method, utilizing drug-encapsulating devices, offers advantages over traditional methods, including tailored release rates, drug protection, and increased patient comfort. Controlled-release drug delivery systems maintain a uniform plasma concentration within the therapeutic range, minimizing side effects and administration frequency. Oral sustained release (SR) products optimize drug properties, reducing dosing frequency and ensuring maximum drug utility, reduced side effects, and quicker cure or control conditions. Technological advancements have revolutionized medication methods with controlled drug delivery systems, offering benefits like multiple dosing and single dosing. Oral CRDD provides continuous oral delivery of drugs at predictable kinetics for a predetermined period, targeting specific regions within the gastrointestinal tract for local or systemic action. This technique reduces drug administration frequency and maintains constant drug levels in the patient's bloodstream, increasing its therapeutic effectiveness.

**Key Words:** *Controlled release, Dosing frequency, Drug concentration, Plasma concentration, Zero order*

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## INTRODUCTION

Controlled drug delivery systems offer benefits such as desired drug levels. However, they also face potential disadvantages such as toxicity, undesirable by-products, surgery, patient discomfort, and potential side effects [1]. Controlled-release systems are expensive compared to traditional pharmaceuticals, but ideal systems should be motionless, biocompatible, powerful, comfortable, safe, easy to administer, and aiming to maintain high drug levels over time.

The ideal polymer balances swelling, erosion, and dissolution processes. However, achieving high gel-state viscosity and maintaining a constant gel layer for linear drug release over prolonged periods remains a challenge

due to various dynamic phases in polymer relaxation, disentanglement, and erosion [2, 3]. Controlled-release drug delivery systems maintain plasma concentration within the therapeutic range, minimizing side effects and administration frequency by providing uniform drug concentration to the absorption site [4, 5].

Sustained release systems aim to reduce dosing frequency or increase drug effectiveness by localizing at the action site, reducing the required dose, or providing uniform drug delivery. These systems provide medications over extended periods, while controlled release systems provide therapeutic control. Sustained-release dosage forms are increasingly being studied for better patient compliance and decreased misuse. Research in this field has yielded numerous discoveries, with new and sophisticated

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controlled release and sustained release delivery systems always being developed and tested [1, 6]. The introduction of orally administered once-daily products raises concerns about testing and clinical assessment. This presentation provides an overview of extended-release products, their theoretical base, typical formulation approaches, and current issues in the field [1].

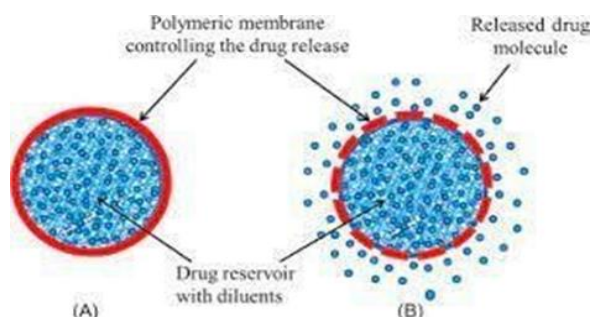
Historically, alkaline compounds or buffers have been used in solid oral formulations of acidic drugs to overcome dissolution rate-limited absorption [7]. However, no strategy has been developed for a simple, compressible, monolithic, and controlled-release system with zero-order kinetics, primarily aimed at minimizing gastrointestinal tract and pH solubility dependency [8].

#### Controlled release dosage form

The USP defines modified-release forms as those that use drug release characteristics to achieve therapeutic or convenience not offered by conventional dosage forms [9]. Extended release dosage forms allow for a two-fold reduction in dosing or a significant increase in patient compliance. Most marketed monolithic oral Extended release dosage forms fall into two technologies: hydrophilic, hydrophobic, or inert matrix systems, and reservoir (coated) systems. These systems involve simple diffusion/erosion systems or osmotic systems, where the drug core is enclosed within a polymer membrane [10, 11].

#### Polymers used in control drug delivery system

Polymers play a crucial role in drug delivery, serving as binders in tablets, viscosity. Flow controlling agents in liquids, suspensions, and emulsions [12]. They can also be used as film coatings to disguise drug taste, enhance stability, and modify release characteristics. Controlled drug delivery (CDD) involves combining a polymer with a drug or active agent to release the active agent in a pre-designed manner, achieving more effective therapies and reducing under and overdosing (**Figure 1**) [4, 13].



**Figure 1.** Polymer-controlled drug delivery.

#### Characteristics of drugs suitable for controlled release

1. Exhibit moderate rates of absorption and excretion [14].
2. Uniform absorption throughout the GI tract [15].

3. Administered in relatively small doses [16].
4. Possess a good margin of safety [17].

#### Advantages

1. Reduced dose and frequency [18].
2. Reduce fluctuations [19].
3. Effect of less drug minimizes local and systemic difficulty [20].
4. Decrease drug accumulation [21].
5. Reduce chronic drug activity [11].

#### Disadvantages

1. Sustained release dosage forms (SRDS) has drawbacks like increased costs and less flexibility in dosage adjustments [22].
2. Risk of dose dumping, reduced drug absorption, delayed action onset, and potential for first-pass clearance [23].
3. They also require more costly manufacturing processes and equipment and cannot be used for drugs absorbed at specific times in GIT [13].
4. Effective drug release in oral formulations is influenced by gastrointestinal residence time and is designed for normal populations [24].
5. However, disease states and interpatient variability are not considered [25].
6. Enzymatic breakdown and product failure can make effective antidotes difficult to use [26, 27].

#### Types of controlled drug delivery systems

Controlled drug delivery systems are broadly classified as follows:

1. Oral controlled release system [28]
2. Targeted delivery system [29]
3. Dental systems [30]
4. Ocular systems [31]
5. Transdermal systems [32]
6. Vaginal and uterine systems [33]
7. Injections and implants [34].

#### Classification

The mechanism to obtain sustained and controlled release of drugs [35], they are classified as follows:

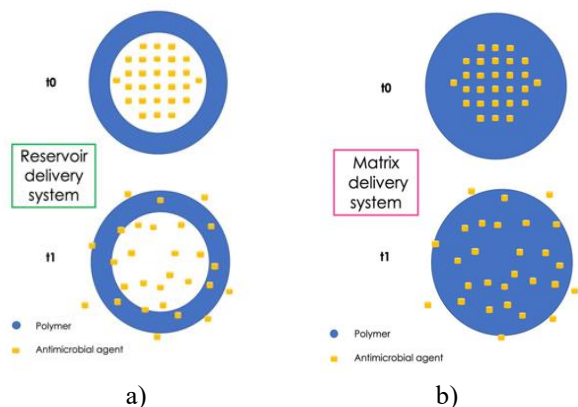
##### • Diffusion-controlled systems

The diffusion process involves drug molecules moving from higher to lower concentration, as per Fick's law. The release charge of a drug depends on diffusion past the membrane barrier [36].

**Reservoir type:** Delivery systems akin to reservoirs are manufactured [37]. This guarantees that the medication exits the delivery vehicle gradually. The partitioning of the drug molecules within the polymeric membrane is

the rate-limiting step during the release process in various kinds of delivery systems (Figure 2) [38, 39].

**Matrix:** The controlled release matrix system delivers drugs at a predetermined rate at specified time, aiming to achieve therapeutic plasma levels through desirable delivery profiles (Figure 2) [40].



**Figure 2.** Schematic diagram of reservoir and matrix systems

- *Dissolution-controlled systems*

High aqueous solubilized drugs that face dissolution rate [41]. Controlling dissolution can be achieved by slowing it down, incorporating it in an insoluble polymer, or coating it with polymeric materials [42]. The rate-limiting step is diffusion across the aqueous boundary layer [43, 44].

**Encapsulation systems:** By using slow-dissolving polymers, microencapsulation procedures coat or

encapsulate drug particles [45, 46]. The coating's thickness and solubility determine how quickly it dissolves.

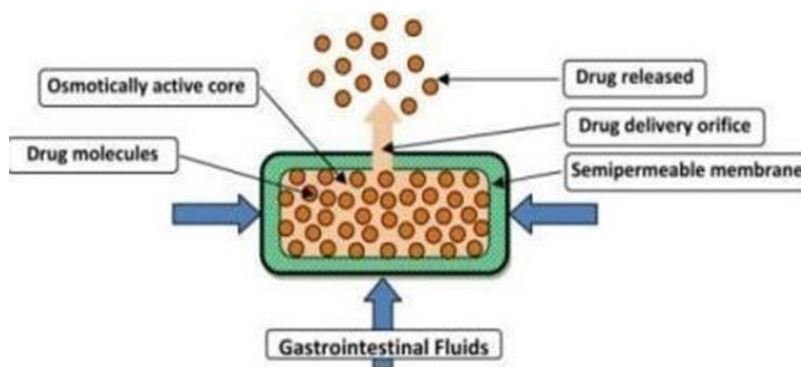
**Matrix systems:** Matrix dissolution systems are the most commonly used technique in controlled delivery system and involve the API being homogeneously distributed throughout a polymer matrix [47]. As the polymer matrix dissolves (typically via an erosion-mediated process), drug molecules are released into the external environment [48].

- *Water penetration-controlled systems*

Its rate control is obtained by the penetration of water into the system [49].

**Swelling-controlled systems:** Swelling-controlled release systems absorb body fluids and swell, increasing solvent content and polymer mesh size and allowing drug diffusion through swollen networks [50, 51].

**Osmotic controlled release systems:** Every osmotic medication delivery method has an osmotic core and a semi-permeable membrane that regulates water flow [52]. They only have one orifice, and the medication is only ever released as a solution [53]. Only works with medications that dissolve in water. Drug release has kinetics [54] that are zero-order (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Schematic diagram of EOP osmotic system.

*Applications*

Controlled-release medications are beneficial for patients with chronic diseases such as diabetes [55], hypertension [56], asthma [57] and epilepsy [58], as well as neurological disorders like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's [59, 60]. They are also used in hormone therapy [61], chronic disease management [62], and pain management [63], providing sustained release of pain-relieving medications [64] for improved control and reduced side effects [65]. Controlled drug delivery systems (CDDS) are used in various fields, including cancer treatment [66], ophthalmology [67],

neurological disorders [68], cardiovascular diseases [69], antibiotic therapy [70], hormone replacement therapy [71], transplantation medicine [72], and pediatric medicine [73]. CDDS provide prolonged relief [74], reduce the need for frequent dosing, and minimize the risk of addiction. They target tumors, improve treatment efficacy, and minimize systemic side effects [75]. CDDS are also used in ophthalmology for sustained drug release, neurological disorders like Parkinson's disease and epilepsy, and in antibiotic therapy for localized infections [76].

### Polymers

Polymers play a significant role in controlled drug delivery systems due to their versatility in modulating drug release rates, targeting specific tissues, and protecting drugs from degradation [75]. Here are a few common types of polymers used in controlled release drug delivery:

1. **Biodegradable polymers:** These polymers break down into harmless byproducts in the body over time, gradually releasing the drug [77, 78]. Examples include polylactic acid (PLA), polyglycolic acid (PGA), and their copolymer poly (lactic-co-glycolic acid) (PLGA).
2. **Hydrogels:** are three-dimensional networks of hydrophilic polymers capable of absorbing and retaining large amounts of water [79]. They can swell in response to changes in environmental conditions (e.g., pH, temperature) and release drugs accordingly [77, 80]. Examples include polyethylene glycol (PEG) and poly(N-isopropylacrylamide) (PNIPAM).
3. **Micelles:** are self-assembled colloidal structures formed by amphiphilic block copolymers in aqueous solutions [81]. They can encapsulate hydrophobic drugs within their core and release them in a controlled manner. Examples include poly (ethylene oxide)-b-poly (propylene oxide) (PEO-PPO) copolymers [82].
4. While not strictly polymers, liposomes are composed of phospholipid bilayers and can encapsulate both hydrophilic and hydrophobic drugs [83, 84]. Surface modifications with polymers like PEG can prolong circulation time and enhance drug delivery efficiency [85].
5. **Dendrimers:** are highly branched polymers with well-defined structures [86]. Dendrimers can encapsulate drugs within their interior or conjugate drugs to their surface, allowing for controlled release kinetics [87]. Examples include polyamidoamine (PAMAM) dendrimers.
6. **Polymeric microspheres/nanoparticles** are solid or porous polymeric particles with drug molecules dispersed or encapsulated within them [88]. They can be designed to release drugs through diffusion, degradation, or a combination of both. Examples include polylactide-co-glycolide (PLGA) microspheres and nanoparticles [89].
7. **Natural polymers** like chitosan, alginate, and hyaluronic acid have been extensively investigated for drug delivery applications due to their biocompatibility and biodegradability [90].

These polymers can be tailored in terms of molecular weight, composition [91], and structure to achieve specific release profiles, site-specific targeting, and reduced toxicity [92]. Controlled-release drug delivery systems offer numerous advantages over conventional dosage

forms, including improved patient compliance, reduced side effects, and enhanced therapeutic efficacy [93].

### CONCLUSION

Dosage forms combine drugs and excipients to enhance stability and taste. Conventional dosage forms struggle with fluctuating plasma drug levels, requiring high dosing frequency and patient compliance. Controlled drug delivery systems improve bioavailability, release, and maintain plasma levels with minimal side effects. These systems include dissolution, diffusion, water penetration, and chemically controlled delivery. Stimuli-responsive delivery systems are useful in disease conditions. Future drug delivery focuses on patient-specific therapy using microfluidic-based, 3D printed devices, and CRISPR cas9-based systems. Modern technologies, including targeted concepts, have revolutionized oral controlled delivery, offering advantages over conventional dosage forms. This optimizes drug properties, reduces dosing frequency, and maximizes drug utility through uniform plasma concentration, making it a popular and convenient delivery method.

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