



Press release – Background article

COMPAMED 2026: Where medical innovation begins

Technological building blocks, industrial implementation and new partnerships along the medtech value chain

Medical innovation begins long before clinical application: with new materials, components and sensors; in electronics and microtechnology; or through innovative manufacturing processes. It is precisely this technological foundation of medical technology that COMPAMED 2026, taking place from 16 to 19 November in Düsseldorf, will be focusing on. More than 700 exhibiting companies will be presenting technologies, products and services for the development and manufacture of modern medical devices in Halls 8a and 8b.

As part of the strategic development of MEDICA and COMPAMED, the role of both events within the medtech value chain is being defined even more clearly. COMPAMED focuses on materials, components, technologies and services for the development and manufacture of medical devices. MEDICA showcases medical products, systems and solutions for use in hospitals and medical practices. Together, they cover the entire spectrum from technological development and manufacturing, through quality assurance, regulation and market access, to practical application in healthcare.

“COMPAMED brings together the companies that make medical innovation technically feasible and industrially viable. Here, medical device manufacturers can find specialist partners for materials, components, development and manufacturing. Together with MEDICA, this creates a link stretching from technological development right through to use in hospitals and medical practices,” explains Carmen Berger, Director of MEDICA & COMPAMED at Messe Düsseldorf.

For trade visitors, this means quick access to specialised partners, the opportunity to discuss technical challenges with experts, and the chance to discover new manufacturing, material and technology solutions for their own



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product development. The close link with MEDICA broadens this perspective to include practical application in healthcare provision.

Five focus areas bring together technological expertise

COMPAMED's thematic focus is centred on five key areas that reflect the core development competencies of the medtech supply industry: micro- and nanotechnology, materials & functional materials, highly automated medtech production, secure connectivity & embedded intelligence, and market regulation & supply chains.

Micro- and nanotechnologies enable ever-smaller sensors, minimally invasive instruments, implants and systems for the targeted delivery of active substances. At the same time, functional materials are gaining in importance – for example, in implants, regenerative applications and solutions for infection prevention. The debate surrounding potential restrictions on PFAS, which include many fluoropolymers, is also increasing the pressure on manufacturers and suppliers to innovate.

Automation addresses key challenges such as rising costs, a shortage of skilled workers and increasing documentation requirements. Connected medical devices, in turn, place new demands on cyber security and embedded intelligence. Added to this are complex regulatory approval processes, trade conflicts and fragile supply chains. Consequently, the ability to organise production and procurement in a resilient and internationally diversified manner is increasingly becoming a competitive factor.

These themes are also reflected in the programme of the two COMPAMED specialist forums, which create a space for technological exchange, knowledge transfer and new collaborations right at the heart of the exhibition.

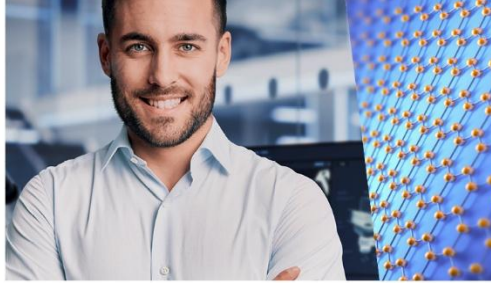
HIGH-TECH FORUM: From microtechnology to industrial applications

The COMPAMED HIGH-TECH FORUM by IVAM in Hall 8a is dedicated, amongst other things, to smart sensor solutions, laser and photonics applications, and microfluidics for the life sciences, medicine and industrial



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applications. It is organised by IVAM, the Professional Association for Microtechnology, in cooperation with Messe Düsseldorf.

A unifying theme is the transfer of technological innovation into industrial processes. Tim Merforth, Managing Director of IVAM, explains: “This includes design transfer, manufacturing, automation, quality assurance and access to international markets. The forum thus links future-oriented technological topics with the very practical challenges facing the industry. It brings together research, specialised technology companies, manufacturers and international networks, thereby creating the conditions for innovations to be transformed into concrete medical applications.”

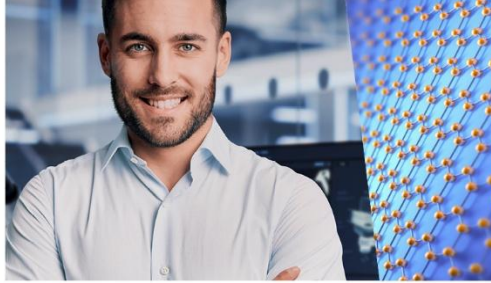
This networking is particularly relevant for small and medium-sized enterprises. After all, hardly any company can navigate the path from research and development through industrialisation and regulation to international market access on its own.

One example of the closer integration between COMPAMED and MEDICA is a hands-on session on microfluidics. As in previous years, it will take place at COMPAMED and, in 2026, will also be offered at MEDICA in a format tailored to the event’s specialist focus. This enables component and process providers to connect more effectively with device manufacturers and end-users.

Technical Tours showcase technologies in an application context

Around 50 member companies will be exhibiting at the IVAM joint stand in Hall 8a. Merforth offers this preview: “Visitors will thus find points of contact for virtually every stage of the medical technology value chain: from materials and individual components, through development and prototyping, to scalable, regulatory-compliant production.”

New for 2026 are the Technical Tours starting from the joint stand. These guide interested visitors directly to technologies and exhibitors relevant to specific medical applications and provide a concise demonstration of how microtechnologies enable innovation. “This creates an attractive opportunity to



discover suitable solutions and engage in targeted discussions with the companies,” explains Merforth.

Transatlantic cooperation despite trade uncertainties

International cooperation remains another key focus. The “Europe meets North America” format, established in 2022, will bring together companies and networks from both sides of the Atlantic on Wednesday, 18 November.

Despite trade policy uncertainties, Tim Merforth continues to see a strong technological and economic link: “We continue to view transatlantic cooperation in medical technology as exceptionally vibrant. Europe and North America possess complementary expertise and are closely linked both technologically and economically. We are convinced that the answer to trade policy uncertainty cannot be less exchange.”

Crucial factors, he says, are resilient partnerships, a better understanding of each other’s markets and a willingness to consider development, production and regulation jointly at an early stage. “This is precisely why COMPAMED provides an important international platform,” said Merforth.

A networking event following the session offers a further opportunity for direct exchange between exhibitors and trade visitors.

SUPPLIERS FORUM: Manufacturing, Regulation, Materials and AI

The COMPAMED SUPPLIERS FORUM by DeviceMed in Hall 8b focuses on other key challenges facing the supply industry. The four days of the exhibition will focus on the following areas:

Monday, 16 November: Manufacturing

New technologies such as 3D printing and printed electronics enable innovative structures and support the development of personalised medical devices. At the same time, established manufacturing processes such as machining and injection moulding remain highly significant.

Tuesday, 17 November: Regulatory Affairs



The Medical Device Regulation (MDR) and the In Vitro Diagnostic Regulation (IVDR) continue to define key framework conditions for manufacturers, suppliers and other stakeholders in the medical technology sector.

Wednesday, 18 November: Materials

Material innovations are among the key drivers of medical technology. The focus will be on, amongst other things, smart materials and additive manufacturing processes, which enable, for example, patient-specific implants.

Thursday, 19 November: Artificial Intelligence

Connected medical devices process highly sensitive data and are often directly linked to hospital networks or cloud systems. AI and cybersecurity must therefore be considered together. Only systems that are secure and protected against tampering can reliably realise their potential in medical applications.



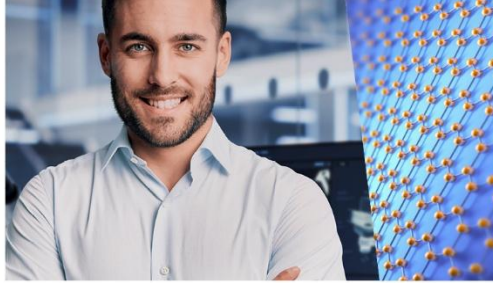
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AI can also provide support throughout the entire life cycle of a medical device: Even manufacturing plants can now be monitored using AI, which is designed to predict wear and tear and potential malfunctions based on operational data (predictive maintenance). AI is also used in in-line inspection during production: modern image recognition algorithms, for example, detect when a workpiece or component is damaged, so that this part can be removed from production at an early stage. This is cheaper and more efficient for manufacturers than having to dispose of the finished product at the end of the production line. The COMPAMED SUPPLIERS FORUM also highlights the use and limitations of AI in post-market surveillance (PMS).

Expertise across the value chain

The diversity of COMPAMED is also demonstrated by its renowned exhibitors. Companies such as Harro Höfliger, MULTIVAC, Nelipak Healthcare Packaging, Trelleborg Sealing Solutions, DuPont, Saint-Gobain, Evonik, SMC and Covestro exemplify expertise ranging from automated manufacturing and packaging, through polymers and functional materials, to robotics and contract development.



COMPAMED 2026 thus does more than simply showcase individual technological trends. It highlights how many specialised areas of expertise must work together before an idea becomes a marketable medical device. It is precisely at these interfaces that new partnerships emerge and the conditions are created to bring innovation from technological development through industrial scaling to medical application.

COMPAMED 2026 will take place from 16 to 19 November, running concurrently with MEDICA 2026 at the Düsseldorf Exhibition Centre.

Further information is available at: <https://www.compamed-tradefair.com>.

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