

Patient Complaints: A 5-Step Guide on What to Do

1 Stay Calm



2 Notify Your Medical Indemnifier Straight Away

This ensures your cover is not compromised by an unduly late notification.



3 Don't Try to "Improve" Your Clinical Notes

This will compromise your credibility, often irrevocably. You will have a chance to fill in incomplete notes and/or explain them later.



4 Write Your Report

Keep it professional, and give more detail rather than less.



A draft report will usually go through multiple revisions before it is settled.

Structure your report as follows:

- A brief description of your qualifications and experience, and your role or position at the time of the event(s).
- A detailed narrative of the care you provided to the patient. This should follow the clinical notes and records and is your opportunity to add more detail.
- A specific response to each of the complaints raised by or on behalf of the patient.
- Either a short rebuttal of the substance of the complaint, or an acknowledgment of failure.
- If you acknowledge failure or mistake, include an appropriate apology, and an account of any changes you have made to your practice in light of the complaint.

5 Give Your Lawyer the Following:

- The complaint.
- Your draft report.
- Agency communications, e.g. HDC, the Privacy Commissioner, the Coroner's Office.
- Any internal communications regarding the complaint from your employer.
- The relevant clinical notes and records.
- Any report of internal or external investigations into the complaint, including transcripts of any interviews you provided to the investigator.



NZMII are here to help!

Contact us if you have any questions about your medical indemnity cover:

nzmii.co.nz
0800 102 220
general@nzmii.co.nz



Note: It is important that all documents are provided to your lawyer without delay.