

# 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.

**Contact Us**

**NZMII are here to help!**

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

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