

Complainant information guide

February 2026

For people concerned about endometriosis or pelvic pain care

1. Purpose of this guide

This guide helps you to understand:

- your rights as a healthcare consumer
- how to raise concerns about your care
- what information you can request
- where to go if you want a second opinion or want to make a complaint.

You can use this guide whether you simply want more information, need support or want to lodge a formal complaint.

2. Your rights as a healthcare consumer

You have the right to:

- receive clear, understandable information about your diagnosis and treatment options
- be fully informed before giving consent to surgery
- ask questions and request more time to decide
- access your medical records
- seek a second opinion
- raise concerns without it affecting your future care
- make a complaint and receive a response.

3. Understanding your treatment options

Before any operation, you should have the chance to discuss:

- the reason surgery is being recommended
- expected benefits and possible outcomes
- known risks and complications
- alternatives, including medication or conservative management
- what happens if you choose not to have surgery.

If this doesn't happen, you have a right to raise a concern or make a complaint. See steps for making a complaint below.

4. Common reasons people raise concerns

Common reasons people raise concerns about endometriosis or pelvic pain care include:

- feeling the surgery may not have been medically necessary
- your symptoms did not improve after surgery
- no endometriosis was found during the procedure

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- you feel you weren't fully informed about risks or alternatives
- you later learned other non-surgical options may have been available
- you feel the procedure you had may not have been the appropriate one.

5. Steps to raising a concern or making a complaint

Step 1: Clarify your concern

It can be helpful to write down:

- what happened
- what you understood at the time
- what information you feel was missing
- how the experience has affected you
- what outcome you are seeking (e.g. explanation, apology, systems improvement, second opinion, investigation).

Step 2: Speak with your care provider (optional)

Many concerns are resolved through:

- a conversation with your surgeon
- a discussion with your GP
- a follow-up appointment.

You can bring a support person with you. This might be a trusted friend or family member, who can help you take notes and discuss your concerns.

Step 3: Contact the hospital or clinic

Health services have internal processes for complaints and feedback.

You can ask to speak with	You can ask about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • patient liaison / consumer liaison • the complaints officer • the practice manager. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how your complaint will be managed • expected timeframes • how you will be kept informed.

Step 4: Accessing your records

You can ask for copies of:

- clinical notes
- referral letters
- pre-operative assessments
- imaging and pathology reports
- operative notes (what the surgeon saw and did)
- discharge summaries
- follow up instructions.

These documents can help you understand the decision for surgery and what occurred during surgery. They can also help new care providers answer any questions you have.

Tip: You can ask for your records in writing via email or letter. Keep a copy of your request and the date you submitted it.

Step 5: Seek a second opinion

Another health professional can:

- review your records
- explain whether surgery was a reasonable option in their opinion
- discuss alternative treatments
- provide guidance for ongoing care.

Step 6: Make a formal complaint to an external body (if you choose)

You have the right to raise your concerns or make a complaint to your state or territory's:

- **Health complaints entity**

A health complaints entity is an independent organisation that listens to your concerns, helps you understand what happened and seeks a response from the health service provider.

They can investigate concerns, help resolve disputes and review care, often using processes like mediation or conciliation. Their focus is on helping patients address problems with a health service and improving the quality and safety of care.

Health complaints entities are specific to each State and Territory; you should contact the one in the jurisdiction where your treatment occurred.

- **regulatory agency – Ahpra, the OHO (QLD) or HCCC (NSW) depending on your location**

These agencies look at concerns about the safety and professional conduct of registered health practitioners. They focus on whether a practitioner's actions could pose a risk to the public.

Whether you make your complaint to a health complaints entity or a regulatory agency they will talk with each other and decide which organisation is best to manage your concerns.

There is no deadline for raising a concern with Ahpra. If you need to focus on your health right now, you can come back to us later. This won't affect how your concern is handled.

Many people worry that making a complaint will affect their ongoing care, but health services and regulators are required to ensure you are not treated differently because you raised concerns.

Ahpra takes all complaints and concerns seriously and we may be aware of other complaints relating to the same health professional or care provider. While we cannot share information about other complaints due to privacy concerns, we can share any information that is publicly available. We will not share your personal information with media.

6. What outcomes are possible?

Health complaints entities and regulatory agencies deal with different complaints and concerns.

Depending on your complaint and who manages it, outcomes may include:

- explanation or clarification
- acknowledgement of concerns
- apology
- review of clinical decision making
- recommendations to improve communication or processes
- recommendations for safer care
- referral for further clinical advice
- support for your ongoing health needs.

When you raise a complaint, you should tell us the outcomes you are hoping to achieve, and we can confirm if they are available through our processes.

Not every complaint results in a finding wrongdoing, but every complaint or concern raised helps us protect others and improve health services.

7. Looking after yourself during the process

It's normal to feel	Support options may include
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• confused• distressed• overwhelmed• unsure what to do next.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• your GP• counselling or psychological support• chronic pain services• endometriosis support groups• patient advocates or health consumers' organisations• trusted family or friends.

8. Tips for navigating the process

- Keep copies of emails, letters and notes
- Write a clear timeline of events
- Bring a support person to appointments
- Ask questions whenever you need clarification
- Take breaks if the process becomes overwhelming
- Focus on what outcome you want

9. Need help creating a request or complaint letter?

If you'd like help with drafting:

- a request for medical records
- a letter seeking an explanation from the surgeon
- a complaint to the hospital.

An internet search can provide templates and links to advocacy services that can support you. If you would like help choosing the right tools, we are happy to help.

10. Contact information

Ahpra

You can contact Ahpra on **1300 361 041** or [submit an enquiry online](#)

Office of the Health Ombudsman (Queensland)

In Queensland you can contact the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO) on 133 646 or [submit a complaint online](#).

The Health Care Complaints Commission (New South Wales)

In New South Wales, you can contact the Health Care Complaints Commission.

Healthcare complaints entities

Contact information for healthcare complaints entities in each state and territory can be found on [Ahpra website](#).