

Healthcare services: Complaining about healthcare services



ombudsman
Public Defender of Rights



ombudsman for children
Defender of Children's Rights

We can advise you on what to do if you are not satisfied with the healthcare you have received. Find out how to raise a complaint and when the Ombudsman can help.

The Ombudsman cannot investigate how hospitals, doctors, or other healthcare providers treated you, nor order them to pay you compensation. However, the Ombudsman can check whether your complaint was handled properly and on time.

What can I do if I am unhappy with my healthcare?

The best outcome is usually to **reach an agreement directly** with the provider. If that is not possible, you have two main options:

- **Make a complaint** – if you want the matter investigated and, where possible, put right. Submit your complaint as soon as possible.
- **Take legal action** – if you are seeking financial compensation or a formal apology. Court proceedings can be lengthy and costly; we strongly recommend consulting a lawyer who specialises in medical law beforehand. See our leaflet on [Legal Assistance](#) for more information.

How to make a complaint?

1 Complain to the healthcare provider

Your first step is always to complain directly to the healthcare provider — for example, the hospital director, your GP, dentist, or specialist.

The provider must:

- offer to discuss your complaint in person if appropriate.
- respond within **30 days** of receiving your complaint (they may extend this by a further 30 days in justified cases).

2 Escalate to the regional authority or relevant ministry

If you are not satisfied with the provider's response, you can write to the authority that granted the provider their licence — **within 60 days** of receiving that response.

In most cases, this is the **regional authority** (health department). The following exceptions apply:

- **Ministry of Justice** — if the previous complaint was handled by the Prison Service or the Ministry of Justice Healthcare Facility
- **Ministry of the Interior** — if the previous complaint was handled by the Regional Healthcare Facility Plzeň
- **Ministry of Defence** — if the previous complaint was handled by the Central Military Hospital, the Military Hospital Olomouc, the Military Hospital Brno, the Institute of Aviation Medicine Prague, or military spa and recreational facilities

3 Complain to the head of the regional authority or the minister

If you are still not satisfied, you can escalate your complaint to the **director of the regional authority** (or the relevant **minister**). They must respond within **60 days**.

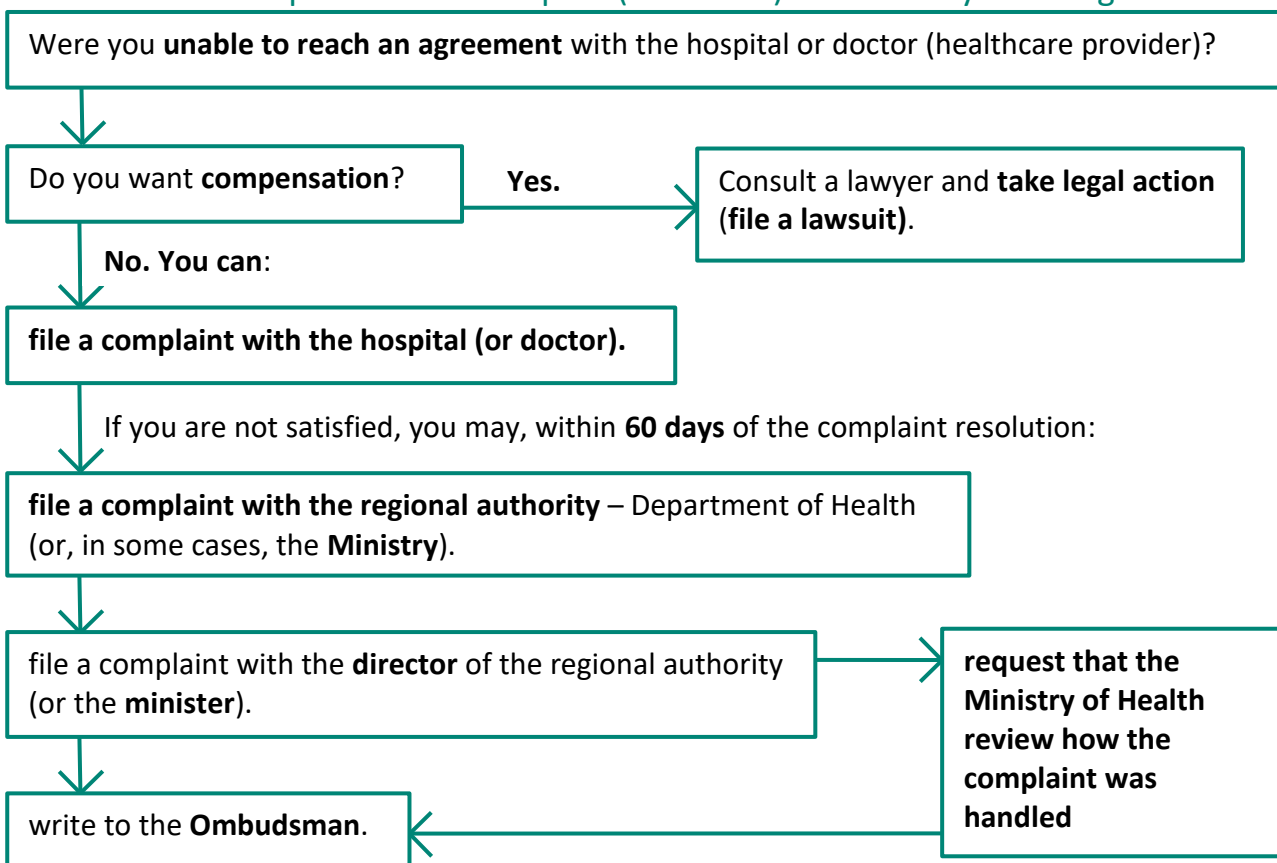
4 Ask the Ministry of Health to review the process — or contact the Ombudsman

If you are still not satisfied after step 3, you can either:

→ ask the **Ministry of Health** to review how your complaint was handled, or

→ contact the **Ombudsman** (or the **Children's Ombudsman** if the matter concerns a child under 18).

How to Handle Disputes with a Hospital (or Doctor): A Summary in a Diagram



How the regional authority (or ministry) handles complaints

If you do not provide all the necessary information, the regional authority or ministry will ask you to supply it.

They may appoint an **independent expert** or an **independent expert panel** to answer technical questions. If they do, they will tell you the expert's name(s). If a panel is appointed, you will also be told the date of its hearing, which you may attend.

The Regional Authority (Ministry) **must resolve your complaint within the following time limits:**

Situation	Standard deadline	Maximum extension
Standard complaint	30 days	+ 30 days
Independent expert appointed	90 days	+ 60 days
Independent expert panel appointed	120 days	+ 60 days

Please note: Even if your complaint is upheld and a mistake is found, the regional authority or ministry **cannot order the provider to pay you compensation**. Only a court can do that. They can, however, require the provider to put things right or to prevent the same mistake happening again.

For more information on the complaint filing process, please visit the website of the relevant regional office (ministry).

How does the director of the regional office (minister) handle the complaint?

The director of the regional office (minister) must resolve the complaint within 60 days of its receipt. This deadline may be exceeded only if the necessary documentation to resolve the complaint cannot be obtained within that time.

How the Ombudsman can help

The Ombudsman can look into whether the regional authority or ministry handled your complaint properly. Contact the Ombudsman if any of the following apply — and the issue was **not resolved** even after you complained to the head of the regional authority or the minister:

- the regional authority or ministry has **failed to act** on your complaint
- they did **not address** every point you raised
- they did **not tell you** the name of the independent expert they appointed

The Ombudsman will check whether the complaint was handled in line with the law and the principles of good administration — in particular, whether it was resolved **properly and within the required time limits**.

What to send the Ombudsman

In your letter or email, explain clearly, **what you think the regional authority (or ministry) did wrong**. Please include:

- a copy of your original complaint to the regional authority (or ministry) and their response
- a copy of your complaint to the head of the regional authority (or minister) and their response

Can the Ombudsman investigate professional chambers (such as the Czech Medical Chamber or the Czech Dental Chamber)?

No. These are not public administrative bodies, so the law does not permit the Ombudsman to intervene in their activities.

Useful contacts

Ministry of Health: Patients may send enquiries and suggestions directly to the Ministry: mzd.gov.cz; podatelna@mzd.gov.cz; (+420)224 971 111

Patient organisations: These organisations support patients and protect their rights and interests. They typically focus on specific conditions or disabilities: pacientskeorganizace.mzd.gov.cz (Patient Portal → Patient organisations → [Search](#))