

Health Bulletin

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

#71 in a series of Health Bulletins on issues of pressing interest to all New Yorkers

Is 9/11 affecting your health?

**How to get information, treatment and
help for 9/11-related health problems**



• Available in Spanish and Chinese: call 311 or visit nyc.gov/health
• Disponible en español: llame al 311 o visite nyc.gov/health
• 需要中文服務 - 可電 311 或造訪網址: nyc.gov/health





Many exposed ... millions affected

- The attack on the World Trade Center and its aftermath affected millions of people.
- Hundreds of thousands were exposed to debris, dust and smoke. This exposure occurred at different levels, over different periods of time.
- Many saw horrible events that day, in person and on television. Rescue and recovery workers and volunteers, as well as residents, office workers and students in Lower Manhattan, experienced high stress levels for months. And many lost businesses, jobs and income as a result of the attack.

Do you feel worse since 9/11?

- Though years have passed, some people still have WTC-related health problems, especially breathing problems (such as asthma) and mental health problems (such as post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD).
- Some people who had breathing or mental health problems before 9/11 got worse afterwards.

Physical health problems.

- Respiratory symptoms are the most common physical health problem among those exposed.
- Many people with WTC respiratory symptoms also have gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), which includes heartburn and upset stomach.

Mental health problems.

- Some survivors have developed psychological problems, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and substance use.
- PTSD is an anxiety disorder caused by experiences of intense fear, hopelessness or horror. It is common among survivors of war, terrorism and personal assault.
- Many recover with counseling or medication, but PTSD can be very difficult, leading to family and work problems, as well as drug and alcohol use.



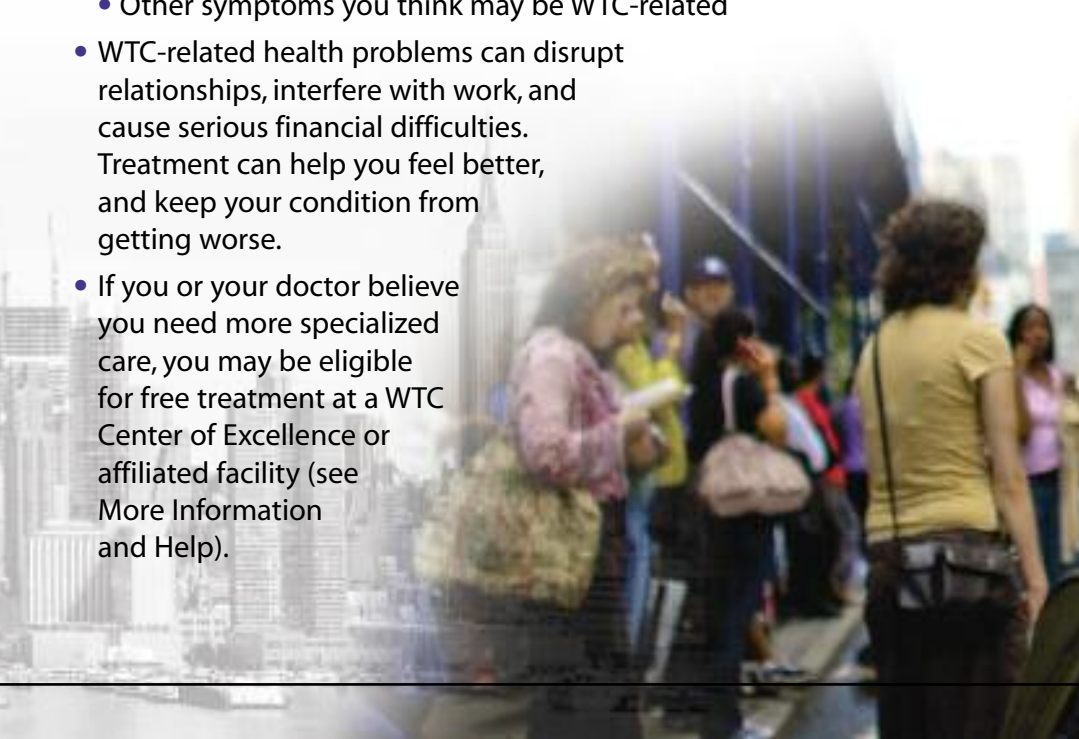
Other problems.

- It isn't yet known if people who were exposed to the WTC collapse are at greater risk for developing cancer or other illnesses – but this is being studied.

Help is available.

Talk to your doctor.

- If you or your children were exposed to the WTC collapse or its aftermath, tell your health care provider about your exposure – especially if you suffer from any of these symptoms:
 - Coughing
 - Wheezing
 - Shortness of breath
 - Sinus congestion
 - Stomach problems
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Other symptoms you think may be WTC-related
- WTC-related health problems can disrupt relationships, interfere with work, and cause serious financial difficulties. Treatment can help you feel better, and keep your condition from getting worse.
- If you or your doctor believe you need more specialized care, you may be eligible for free treatment at a WTC Center of Excellence or affiliated facility (see More Information and Help).





Stay healthy.

- **Have a regular doctor.** Check-ups are important. Early diagnosis and prompt, appropriate treatment can help you stay healthy, whether or not the disease is related to WTC exposure.
- **If you smoke, quit now!** For free help, call 311 and ask for the Smokers' Quitline.
- **Be physically active.** Get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity (such as a brisk walk) at least five days a week.
- **Eat a healthy diet and maintain a healthy weight.** Eat more fruits and vegetables and less fat, sugar and salt.





More Information and Help

WTC Centers of Excellence

Testing, medical monitoring and treatment (including medications) are available with no out-of-pocket costs for people exposed to the WTC disaster and its aftermath.

- **The World Trade Center Environmental Health Center** at Bellevue Hospital Center, Gouverneur Health Care Services and Elmhurst Hospital Center (Lower Manhattan residents, students and workers): **877-982-0107**
- **Mount Sinai Consortium:** WTC Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program (rescue and recovery workers and volunteers): **888-702-0630**
- **The Fire Department of New York:** WTC Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program (FDNY and emergency workers): **718-999-1858**

Other Resources

NYC 9/11 Benefit Program: Helps cover out-of-pocket costs for 9/11-related mental health and substance use treatment: **877-737-1164**

WTC National Responder Health Program: Serves WTC rescue, recovery or clean-up workers or volunteers who live outside the NYC area: **877-498-2911**

Visit nyc.gov/9-11healthinfo: It's New York City's full-service information resource on the health effects of 9/11. The site links to programs listed here and offers the latest information on research and services for those affected.

**DIAL
311**

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Prepared in cooperation with:

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Telephone Interpretation in More Than 170 Languages