An early World Trade Center (WTC) Health Registry study found that dust cloud exposure among survivors who evacuated damaged and destroyed buildings was associated with self-reported hearing issues.\(^1\) Two recent publications from the WTC Health Registry reported that among enrollees who were rescue and recovery workers,\(^2\) residents, passersby and area workers,\(^3\) an increase in WTC exposure and being unable to hear in the dust cloud were associated with greater odds of hearing issues.

A study by the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) found that workers who were most exposed to the WTC disaster had greater odds of constant ear symptoms.\(^4\) An analysis of FDNY medical surveillance data found that FDNY responders with high levels of exposure were at greater risk of constant reductions in hearing sensitivity.\(^5\)

Hearing loss is a condition that affects adults and children. It is usually caused by inner ear or nerve damage. Hearing loss is not currently recognized as a covered condition by the WTC Health Program. Other causes besides exposure to the 9/11 disaster include:

- Exposure to loud noises (such as heavy machinery or loud music), which can result in sudden hearing loss
- A punctured eardrum from objects inserted into the ear
- Earwax (fluid) buildup
- Certain medications, infections, allergies and childhood diseases such as chickenpox, measles and mumps, which can lead to permanent hearing loss

To learn more about hearing loss and other 9/11-related health conditions, visit [nyc.gov/911health](http://nyc.gov/911health) and click on the **Enrollees** tab, then **Health Conditions**.

NYC Well staff are available 24/7 to provide brief counseling and referrals to care in over 200 languages. For support, call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355), text “WELL” to 65173 or chat at [nyc.gov/nycwell](http://nyc.gov/nycwell).

This material is provided by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s WTC Health Registry. For questions, email wtchr@health.nyc.gov.

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