

# Lung function recovery seen in people exposed to World Trade Center site

October 4 2012

---



Breathing tests improved more for 9/11 rescue crews than nearby workers.

(HealthDay)—Some workers and residents exposed to dust and fumes after the 2001 collapse of the World Trade Center towers have shown gradual improvement in lung function, according to a new study.

The findings show that airway injury is reversible in some people, the researchers said.

They analyzed the results of repeated [lung](#) function tests in more than 900 people exposed to the New York City site during or after the terrorist attacks. At the first evaluation, the patients had a "restrictive" pattern of lung-function abnormalities typical of World Trade Center exposure, and about 86 percent had breathing-related symptoms.

The patients had an average of three lung function tests performed up to six years apart. Two measures of the ability to exhale air from the

lungs—forced vital capacity and forced expiratory volume in one second—increased by an average of 1 percent or more per year, Dr. Joan Reibman, of the New York University School of Medicine, and colleagues found.

The study was published in the October issue of the [Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine](#).

People with different types of exposure had different patterns of improvement in lung function. People who worked near the [World Trade Center](#) had the least improvement, while rescue and recovery workers had greater improvement, according to a journal news release.

Despite the improvement, lung function remained below normal for all groups of patients. The study also found that patients who were [heavy smokers](#) had no long-term improvement in lung function.

The findings reinforce the importance of continued treatment for patients with airway injury, the researchers said. Similar long-term evaluation and follow-up may be needed for people with such injury caused by other [environmental disasters](#), they added.

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [World Trade Center health effects](#).

Copyright © 2012 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Lung function recovery seen in people exposed to World Trade Center site (2012, October 4) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-10-lung-function-recovery-people-exposed.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.