

# But not healthy in every way



Despite Australia's mostly good health, not all the trends are good and diseases and injury still impose a major burden on individuals and the community. This section begins by ranking various health problems according to their national burden. It then shows some areas where things are (or may be) getting worse. Although they do not outweigh the great progress, those areas do pose a challenge to our health system and in some cases to aspects of our lifestyle.

It is also plain that some population groups do worse than others. That is covered in the section after this.

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# Ranking the burdens

We can compare the impact of different health problems by using a measure known as the 'burden of disease and injury'. For many diseases and injuries, it adds up the impact of premature death, prolonged illness and disability. The unit of measure is called a DALY—a disability-adjusted life year. Chapter 2 in *Australia's health 2010* explains this in more detail.

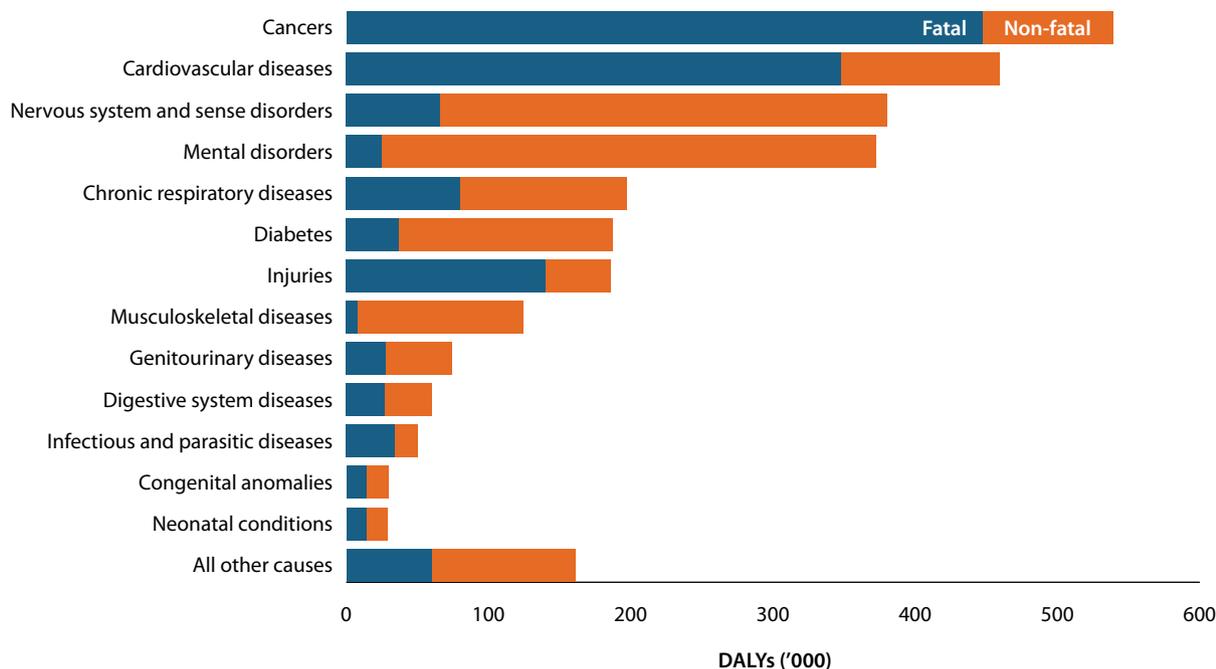
We can see that cancer is estimated to be the leading cause of Australia's burden of disease and injury in 2010, clearly ahead of cardiovascular disease. Both of these disease groups have a much larger fatal component (from premature death) than the next-ranked pair. The group labelled 'Nervous system and sense disorders' includes problems such as dementia and vision loss.

In particular, the burden measure highlights the major impact of mental disorders, ranked fourth. They carry a greater burden of illness and disability than any of the other problems.

### Find out more:

*Australia's health 2010*  
Chapter 2

## Projected fatal and non-fatal burden of major disease groups, 2010



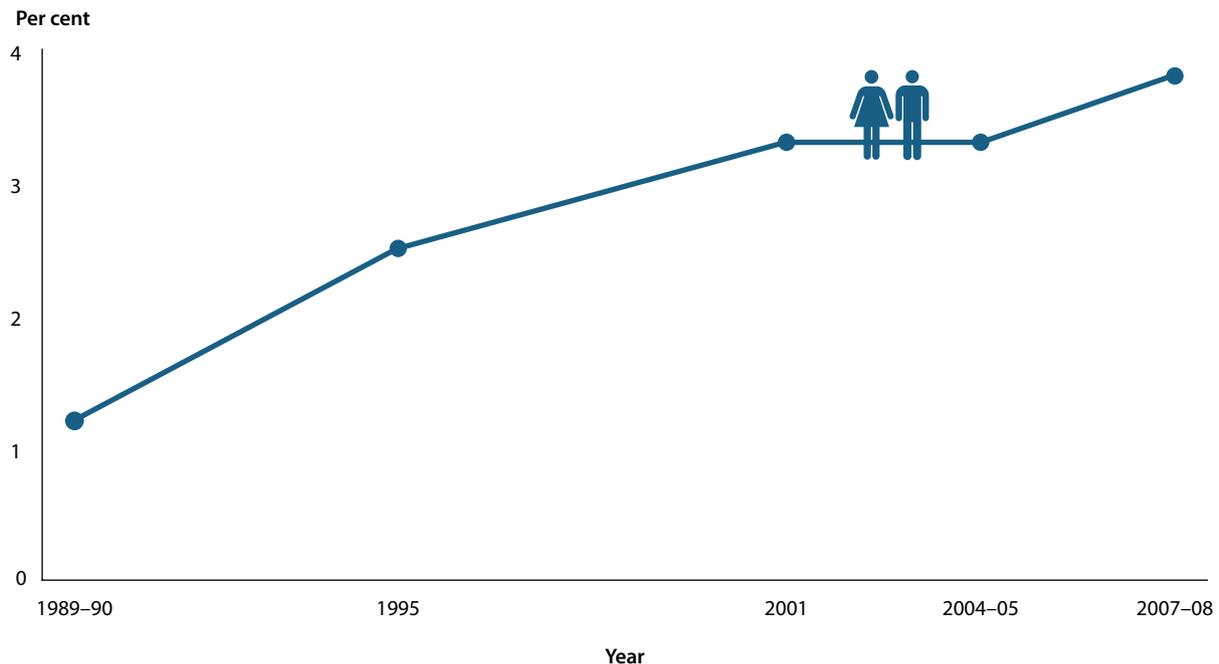
# Diabetes on the march

National surveys suggest that diabetes is now about three times as common as it was 20 years ago, with over 800,000 of today's Australians having been diagnosed with the disease. Although this estimate is based on what people report about their health, surveys that used tests to detect diabetes have shown a similar pattern of growth. About 85–90% of diabetes cases are the Type 2 variety, which begins mainly among the middle aged. It is believed that the growing prevalence is linked to our low levels of exercise and especially to our rising levels of overweight and obesity (see later).

## Find out more:

*Australia's health 2010*  
Chapter 4

## Prevalence of diagnosed diabetes: trend



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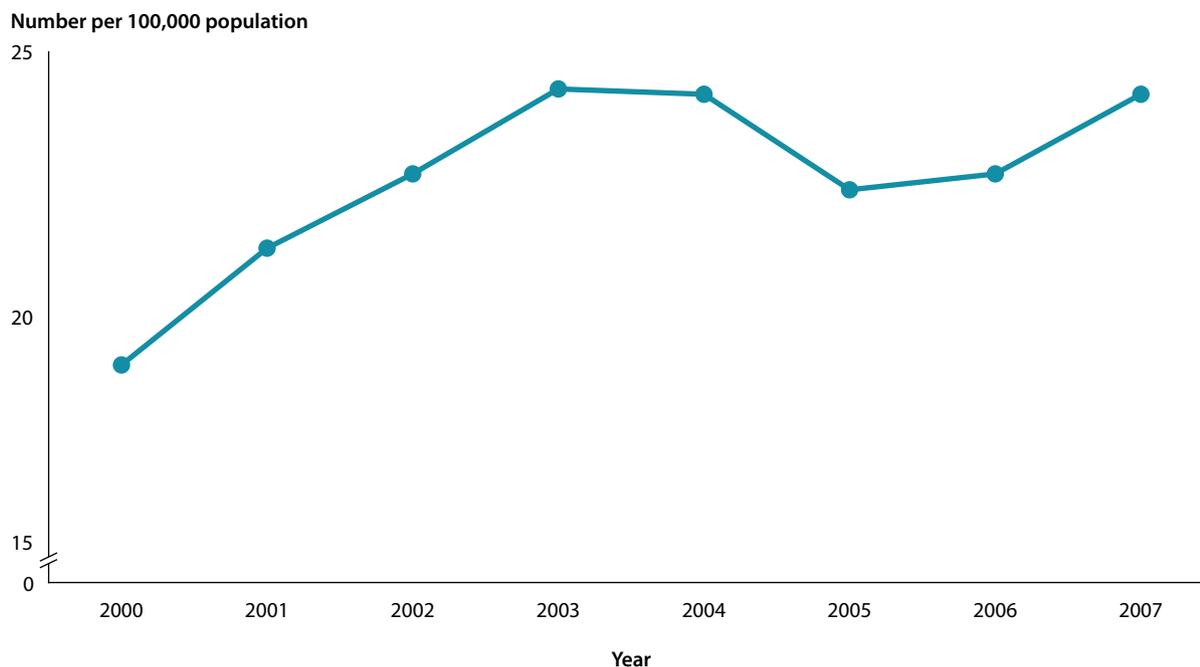
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# Is Type 1 diabetes increasing?

Type 2 diabetes may not be the only major form of the disease that is on the rise. Type 1 is the auto-immune form that begins mainly in childhood and young adulthood. Its incidence in Australia is being tracked through a national register run by the AIHW. Between 2000 and 2007 the register found an increase of 30% in the rate of new Type 1 cases among children aged under 15 years. The increase was in line with international trends and some earlier Australian studies. Australia's Type 1 incidence among this age group has been estimated as the sixth highest among OECD countries in 2010.

**Find out more:**  
*Australia's health 2010*  
Chapter 4

## Incidence of Type 1 diabetes in children under 15 years: trend



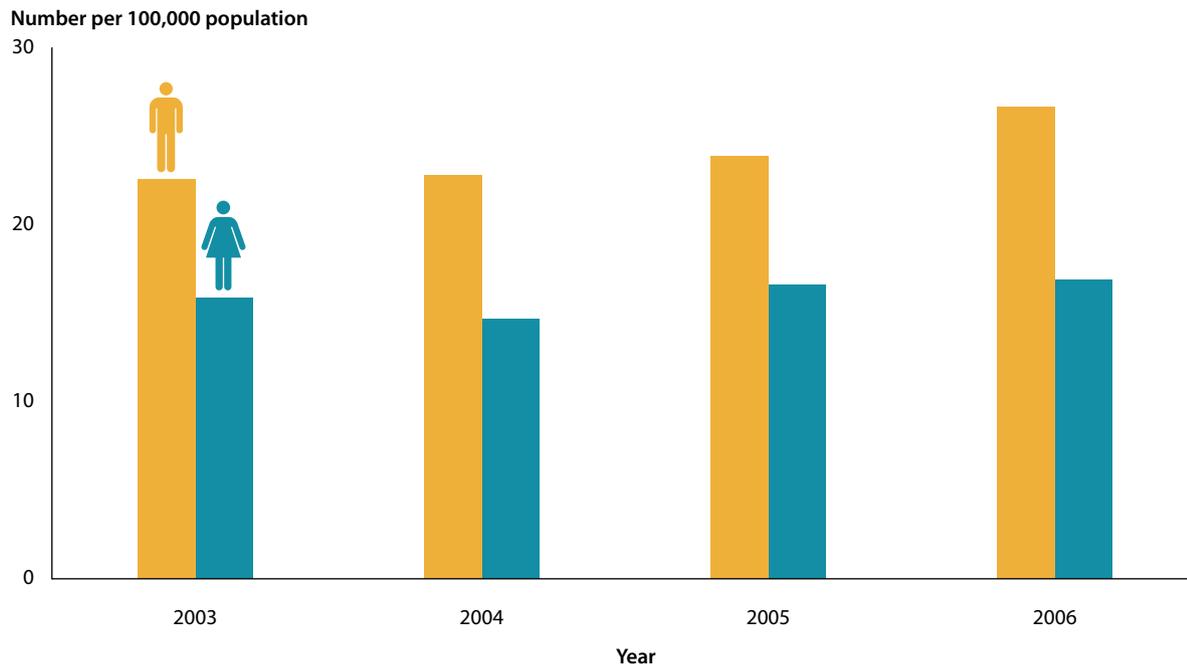
# Is severe kidney disease increasing?

Another serious problem that may be arising more often is end-stage kidney disease (ESKD). This is kidney disease that has advanced to the stage where a person's only chance of survival is dialysis, or preferably a transplant. There was a statistically significant increase in the total male incidence rates of ESKD (treated and untreated) between 2003 and 2006, but it is not yet clear if there is an overall trend. Males are affected much more often than females.

**Find out more:**  
*Australia's health 2010*  
chapters 4 and 9

One of several possible reasons for any increase may be that kidney disease is a common complication of diabetes, and levels of diabetes are known to be rising.

## Incidence of end-stage kidney disease



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# Heavier and heavier

One of the strongest and best-known trends in Australia's health has been the marked and steady increase in bodyweight over the past few decades. Our obesity level puts us squarely among the 'worst' third of OECD countries.

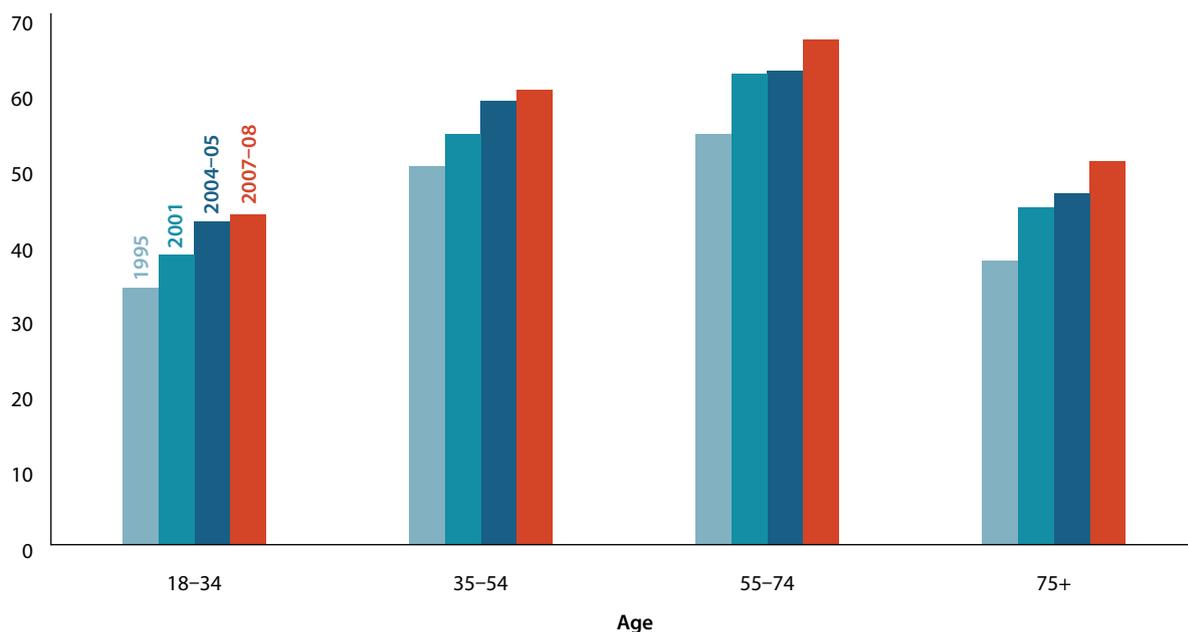
**Find out more:**  
*Australia's health 2010*  
chapters 4 and 9

The rise in overweight and obesity has occurred among Australian males and females of virtually all ages. Many experts are concerned about the effect this may have on our rates of diabetes, heart disease and other disorders, perhaps even on our life expectancy.

Based on measured height and weight in 2007–08, 25% of children aged 5–17 years were overweight or obese and this rose to 61% of adults.

## Overweight and obesity prevalence: trends

Per cent of population

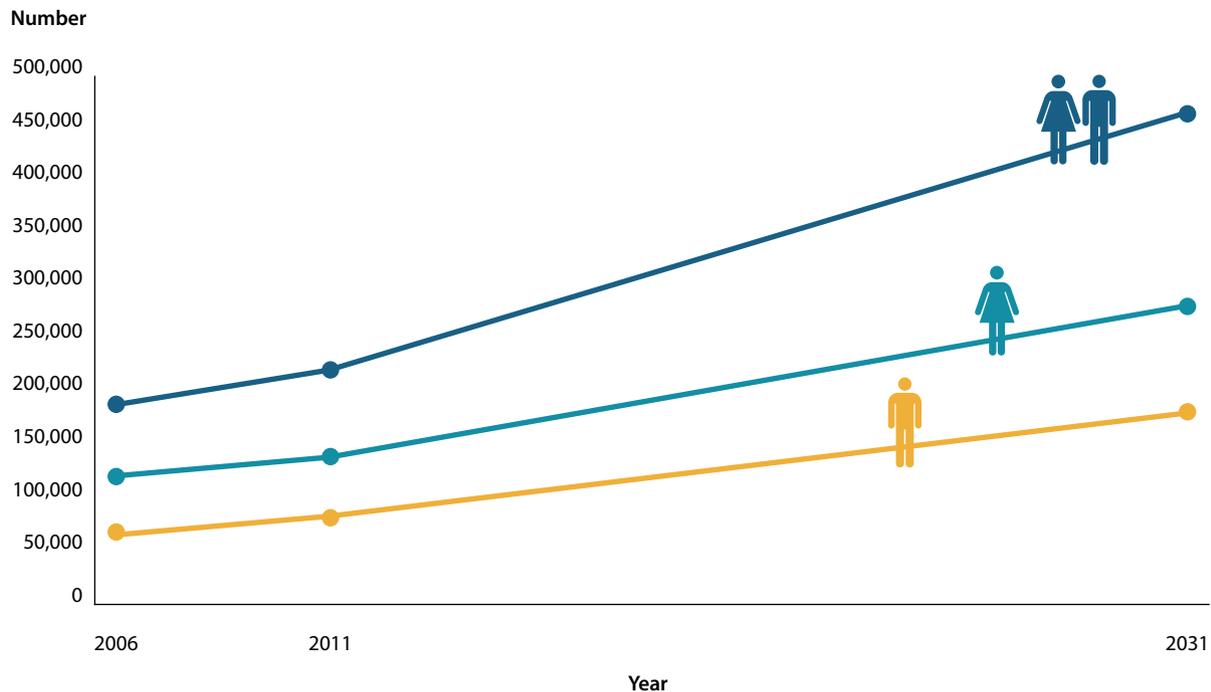


# Dementia set to grow

A growing problem in older age is dementia. Numbers are expected to rise markedly as the population grows and more and more Australians reach advanced old age. Over 200,000 Australians are estimated to have dementia in 2010, with the number projected to more than double over the next 20 years. Dementia imposes a serious burden of disease for those affected, with severe levels of disability.

**Find out more:**  
*Australia's health 2010*  
Chapter 4

## Projected number of people with dementia



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# Burden on young minds

Mental problems can weigh very heavily on the young. The latest national survey of the more common mental health disorders found that one in five Australians aged 16–85 years had been affected at some time during the previous 12 months—and this included one in four of those aged 16–24 years. In the estimates of disease burden for 2010, mental disorders account for about *half* of the burden in these young people. (See page 18 of this booklet and Chapter 2 of *Australia's health 2010* for an explanation of DALYs, the burden measure.)

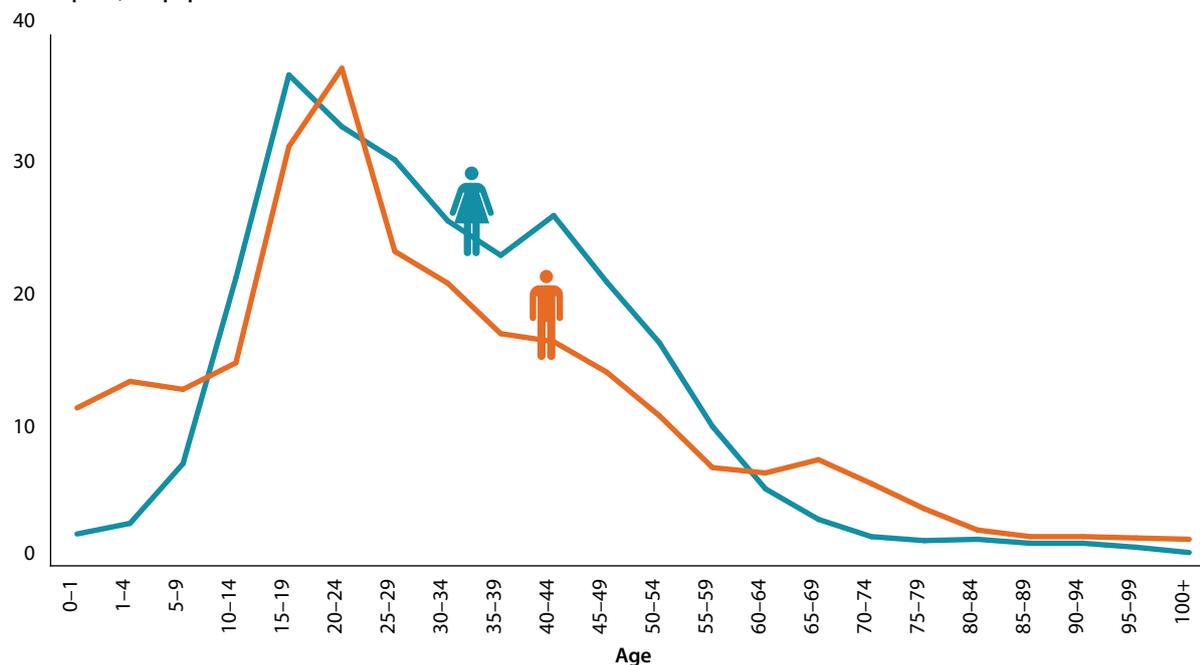
## Find out more:

*Australia's health 2010*

Chapter 6

## Mental health DALYs, 2010

DALYs per 1,000 population



# Chlamydia rates rising

Another problem affecting many young Australians is the sexually transmissible infection chlamydia. Often unnoticed at first, it can have serious complications. The rate of chlamydia notifications more than tripled over the last decade and the number of cases, at over 62,000 in 2009, was far higher than for any other infectious disease. Young people aged 15–29 years account for over 80% of the cases. Notifications increased in both males and females, although there were about 50% more notifications for females than males.

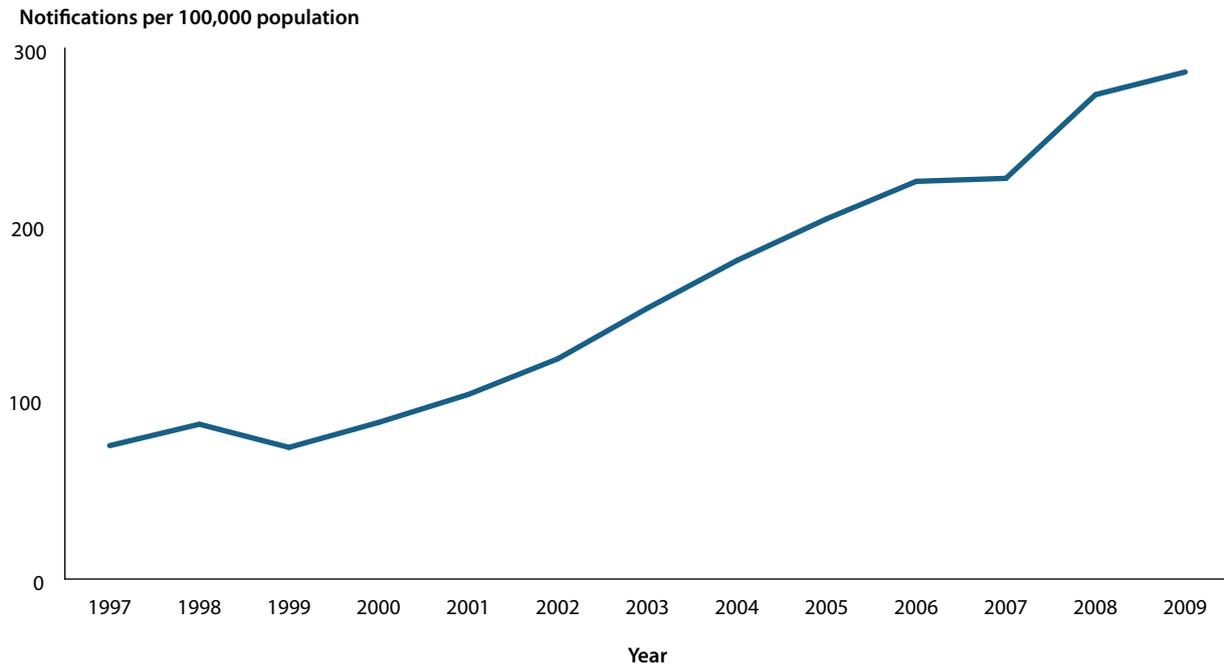
Interestingly, the incidence rates of two other important sexually transmissible infections, HIV and gonorrhoea, were somewhat higher

in 2009 than a decade before. But in both cases the rate appears to have been fairly stable in the more recent half of the decade.

## Find out more:

*Australia's health 2010*  
chapters 4 and 6

## Notification rates of chlamydia: trend



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