



## TODAY IN 1889

Inspired by Jules Verne, New York World reporter Nellie Bly set out to travel around the world in less than 80 days. (She made it in 72.)

# U.S. chlamydia cases at record high

## CDC reports rates of 3 STDs are rising

By Mike Stobbe  
Associated Press

ATLANTA — More than 1 million cases of chlamydia were reported in the United States last year — the most ever reported for a sexually transmitted disease, federal health officials said yesterday.

Officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said they think better and more intensive screening accounts for much of the increase, but added that chlamydia was not the only sexually transmitted disease on the rise.

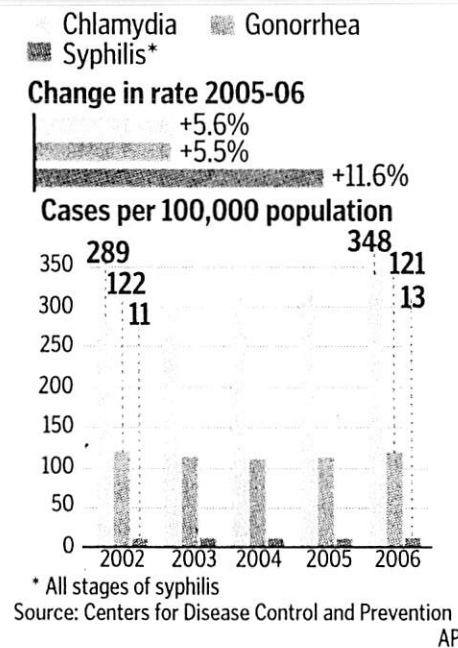
The gonorrhea rate is jumping again after hitting a record low, and an increasing number of cases are caused by a “superbug” version resistant to common antibiotics, federal officials said yesterday.

Syphilis is rising, too. The rate of congenital syphilis — which can deform or kill babies — rose for the first time in 15 years.

The CDC releases a report each

## STD rates rising

Rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis increased between 2005 and 2006.



year on chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis, three diseases caused by sexually transmitted bacteria.

Chlamydia is the most common. Nearly 1,031,000 cases were reported last year, up from 976,000 in

2005.

The count broke the single-year record for reported cases of a sexually transmitted disease, which was 1,013,436 cases of gonorrhea, set in 1978.

Putting those numbers into rates, there were about 348 cases of chlamydia per 100,000 people in 2006, up 5.6 percent from the 329 per 100,000 in 2005.

About three-quarters of women with chlamydia have no symptoms. Left untreated, the infection can spread and ultimately cause infertility. It's easily treated if caught early.

The chlamydia rate is more than seven times as high in black women as in whites, and more than twice as high in black women as in Hispanics.

The gonorrhea story is somewhat different. In 2004, the nation's gonorrhea rate fell to 112.4 cases per 100,000 people, the lowest point since the government started tracking cases in 1941.

But since then, there have been two consecutive years of increases. The 2006 rate — about 121 per 100,000 — is a 5.5 percent increase from 2005.

Health officials don't know exactly how many superbug cases there were among the more than 358,000 gonorrhea cases reported in 2006. But a surveillance project in 28 cities found that 14 percent were resistant to ciprofloxacin and other medicines in the fluoroquinolone class of antibiotics.

Similar samples found that 9 percent were resistant to those antibiotics in 2005 and 7 percent were resistant in 2004. The appearance of the superbug has been previously reported, and in April the CDC advised doctors to stop using those drugs against gonorrhea.

Dr. John M. Douglas Jr. of the CDC said it doesn't look like the superbugs are the reason for gonorrhea's rising numbers, but they're not sure what is.

Syphilis, a potentially deadly disease that first shows up as genital sores, has become relatively rare in the United States. The rate rose from 2.9 cases per 100,000 people in 2005 to 3.3 in 2006, a 14 percent increase.

For congenital syphilis, which babies get the disease from their mothers, the rate rose only slightly.