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Health officials in [Nunavut](#) will begin asking all expecting and nursing mothers to undergo screening for a rare and untreatable virus that has appeared in the territory.

Human T-cell Lymphotropic Virus, Type 1 (HTLV-1) occurs mostly in [Japan](#), [Caribbean countries](#) and [Africa](#), affecting between 15 million and 25 million people worldwide.

Doctors say most people who contract it will show no symptoms, but in about five per cent of cases, it can lead to cancers of the blood and diseases affecting the nervous system.

The development of those conditions can take 10 to 20 years.

It's rarely seen in [Canada](#), but as many as 20 people in [Nunavut](#) have tested positive for it.

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