

Modified Bell's Staging Criteria for Necrotizing Enterocolitis

STAGE	SYSTEMIC SIGNS	INTESTINAL SIGNS	RADIOLOGIC SIGNS	TREATMENT
I. Suspected				
A	Temperature instability, apnoea, bradycardia	Elevated pregavage residuals, mild abdominal distension, occult blood in stool	Normal or mild ileus	NPO, antibiotics x 3 days
B	Same as IA	Same as IA, plus gross blood in stool	Same as IA	Same as IA
II. Definite				
A: Mildly ill	Same as IA	Same as I, plus absent bowel sounds, abdominal tenderness	Ileus, pneumatosis intestinalis	NPO, antibiotics x 7 to 10 days
B: Moderately ill	Same as I, plus mild metabolic acidosis, mild thrombocytopenia	Same as I, plus absent bowel sounds, definite abdominal tenderness, abdominal cellulitis, right lower quadrant mass	Same as IIA, plus portal vein gas, with or without ascites	NPO, antibiotics x 14 days
III Advanced				
A: Severely ill, bowel intact	Same as IIB, plus hypotension, bradycardia, respiratory acidosis, metabolic acidosis, disseminated intravascular coagulation, neutropenia	Same as I and II, plus signs of generalised peritonitis, marked tenderness and distension of abdomen.	Same as IIB, plus definite ascites	NPO, antibiotics x 14 days, fluid resuscitation, inotropic support, ventilator therapy, paracentesis
B: Severely ill: bowel perforated	Same as IIIA	Same as IIIA	Same as IIB, plus pneumoperitoneum	Same as IIA, plus surgery