

STATEMENT ON

NUTRITIONAL

PRACTICES

in the NICU

FOR EXTREMELY
LOW BIRTH WEIGHT INFANTS

The National Coalition for Infant Health emphasizes the critical importance of individualized nutritional care in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), particularly for extremely low birth weight (ELBW) infants weighing less than 1250 grams.

Research strongly supports the use of an exclusive human milk diet as the safest and most effective nutritional approach for these vulnerable infants in NICU, including human milk-based formulas and fortifiers. These fragile infants require additional nutritional fortification to achieve critical growth milestones. An exclusive human milk diet is the safest way to achieve growth outcomes while reducing the risk of a life-threatening condition, necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC).

We call on neonatal healthcare providers to provide information on all available nutritional options to families and to engage with them in shared decision making regarding the nutrition their babies receive in the NICU.

The coalition is committed to promoting evidence-based practices that prioritize the health and safety of the most fragile infants in the NICU.

