Breastfeeding and diving

I have a question concerning breastfeeding and diving. My wife and I have just had a baby. She is still breastfeeding and if everything goes well, she would like to carry on for the next 4 months at least. On the other hand, she is eager to resume diving. And I wondered if the nitrogen that gradually saturates our tissues and which will necessarily go into the milk can have an impact on the baby. We dive at a maximum depth of 30 m and stay within the limits of no-decompression diving. Have any studies been done in this field? What could be the impact on the baby? I think my wife will express her milk before diving so that she can feed the baby with non-nitrogenated milk, but how long does it take for nitrogen to desaturate the breast tissue?

Answer from DAN experts:

There is no accumulation of nitrogen in breast milk, and even if this were the case, drinking this milk would not cause any risk of decompression in the baby. Your wife can therefore resume diving a few weeks after giving birth (in general, it is recommended to wait at least 3 weeks to recover from the “trauma” of childbirth and hormonal changes). In the first few months, we recommend to stay within the limits of “no-deco dives”, i.e. dives which don’t have mandatory decompression stops – after all, the bodily changes induced by these 9 months of pregnancy should not be underestimated. Only one disadvantage may occur when your wife dives during the months she is still breastfeeding: the pressure exerted by the dive suit on the chest and on the breasts could (in some cases) reduce milk production (it is a known technique for woman who want to stop breastfeeding, to wear tight clothes or bandages around the chest). But as your wife will not wear the dive suit all day, this risk isn’t very high.