Biologists have devised a hair dryer that will bring relief to millions of parents distressed by their children's head lice infestation. The new device, named 'Louse Buster' was developed by Dale Clayton a biology professor from the University of Utah.

When children come home scratching their heads you know it's not a math problem they are struggling with - it's head lice. But you'd rather not use any of those icky-smelling chemical shampoos for fear of doing more harm than good to your child. Anti-lice shampoos are usually harsh insecticides meant to terminate the louse. Such shampoos can cause an allergic reaction or even hair loss in some children, sources say.

The hair dryer Clayton designed uses a strong blast of air heated to 60°C (140°F) which results in 'drying' the insects and their eggs. During early experiments, Clayton had found the louse unable to survive in the absence of humidity which gave him the inspiration for the hair dryer. A specially designed nozzle-comb is to be used along with the dryer for maximum effect. The nozzle, when held close to the scalp, dries the louse to death. Its nits are not spared either. Trials indicated the special hairdryer + comb combination succeeded in eliminating 80 percent of lice and 98 percent of their eggs. Lice which survived the air blast were rendered unable to breed. Clayton is optimistic about the gadget.

Lice have been known to develop resistance to some of the anti-lice shampoos over time, as a result of which many parents complain that they are not effective. In contrast, the Louse Buster is an "effective and safe treatment and one to which lice are unlikely to evolve resistance" Clayton said.

The biologist warned parents not experiment with hair dryers and to use only shampoos recommended by pediatrics until his invention arrives in the market.

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