

Tissue Paper

Category: Guts

written by Anne Whetzel | April 18, 2026

My son is at the sink washing wet, sticky tissue paper off his hands (a four-year-old's experiment).

I flash back to his surgeon's voice saying that a preemie's intestines are like wet tissue paper.

The surgeon repeats this phrase as she explains the exploratory intestinal surgery she would be performing. She describes the process with confidence, as I sit there thinking it might be easy to sew wet tissue paper back together.

My son cries while standing at the faucet. He wants to put the pieces back together, but they're now a wet pile at the bottom of the sink.

I lift up his shirt to dry his eyes. The scar on his belly shows that it might just be possible to reassemble those flimsy pieces.

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