

PRODUCT HOUSING STACKED BODY OF WET TISSUES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a wet tissue product having a stacked body of folded wet tissues housed in a container or package.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In general, wet tissues are sealed and housed in a container or package so as to keep their wet state before use or when unused. These wet tissues are stacked, such that they have overlapping portions between the upper and lower wet tissues, so that they are consecutively and sequentially pulled out of an outlet provided in the container or package. When the wet tissue at the uppermost position is pulled out, a portion of the succeeding wet tissue is protruded from the outlet of the container. This is generally called the "pop-up type". The conventional wet tissue stacked body of this "pop-up type" will be described with reference to the drawings.

One example of the conventional wet tissue stacked body, as shown in Fig. 14, is formed in the following manner. First, a wet tissue 61A is folded in two along its center line 64 as a folding line, as shown in Fig. 12(A), such that a wet tissue 61B having such a shape as shown in Fig. 12(B) is produced. In Fig. 14, the wet tissues 61B are stacked such that a lower half 63 of the upper wet tissue 61B is sandwiched between an upper half 62 and a lower half 63 of the lower wet tissue 61B.

When the upper wet tissue 61B is pulled out, the upper half 62 of the lower wet tissue 61B, which is put on the lower half 63 of the upper wet tissue 61B, is pulled up together toward the outlet (not shown) to be pulled out from the outlet. Thus, the upper half 62 of the lower wet tissue 61B comes out of the outlet so that the wet tissues can be pulled out consecutively one by one.

However, in the wet tissue stacked body shown in Fig. 14, the overlapping area between the lower half 63 of the upper wet tissue 61B and the upper half 62 of the lower wet tissue 61B is as large as about one half of the area of the wet tissue 61A before being folded. Therefore, when the upper wet tissue 61B is pulled out, the length of the protrusion of the succeeding lower wet tissue 61B becomes as large as about one half of the length of the wet tissue 61A before being folded.

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If the protrusion of the wet tissue is too large, it can not be confined within the area of a cover which is usually provided with the container or package to cover the outlet. As a result, the protrusion partially extends out of the cover. Then, the wet tissue dries up at this portion extending out of the cover. Moreover, when the protrusion partially extends out of the cover, it is difficult to close the cover reliably. This lowers the sealability of the container or package, so that the overall wet tissue stacked body is liable to dry up.

Fig. 15 shows another example of the conventional wet tissue stacked body. The wet tissue stacked body shown in **Fig. 15** is formed in the following manner. A wet tissue **71A**, as shown in **Fig. 13(A)**, is folded back at its end portions toward the opposite faces along the folding lines **75** and **76** which divide the wet tissue **71A** substantially in three such that a wet tissue **71B** having such a shape as shown in **Fig. 13(B)** is formed. As shown in **Fig. 15**, the wet tissues **71B** are stacked such that a lower portion **72** of the upper wet tissue **71B** is sandwiched between an upper portion **74** and an intermediate portion **73** of the succeeding lower wet tissue **71B**.

In this construction, the overlapping area between the lower portion **72** of the upper wet tissue **71B** and the upper portion **74** of the lower wet tissue **71B** is as large as about one third of the area of the wet tissue **71A** before folded. Therefore, the length of the protrusion of the succeeding lower wet tissue **71B** becomes shorter than that of the example shown in **Fig. 14**. However, since the wet tissue **71B** is folded in three, the stacked body composed of a plurality of wet tissues **71B** becomes too thick.

Disclosed in Japanese Patent Laid-Open No. 213453/1995 (which corresponding U.S. patent is No. 5,497,903) is a wet tissue folding structure which allows the wet tissues to be consecutively pulled out. This wet tissue folding structure is shown in **Fig. 16**. In this folding structure, the lower half **63** of the wet tissue **61B** shown in **Fig. 12(B)** is further folded in two along a folding line **65** to form a wet tissue **61C** shown in **Fig. 12(C)**. As shown in **Fig. 16**, the wet tissues **61C** are then stacked such that the upper half **62** of the lower wet tissue **61C** is sandwiched between the upper half **62** and an intermediate portion **66** of the upper wet tissue **61C**.

Here, as shown in **Fig. 16**, the wet tissue **61C** is further indicated by **61C1**, **61C2** and **61C3**, in order from the top. When the wet tissue **61C1** is pulled out, the righthand half of the upper half **62** of the wet tissue **61C2** is pulled up together with the intermediate portion **66** of the wet tissue **61C1** and protruded from the outlet. In this folding structure, therefore, the length of the protrusion of the succeeding lower wet tissue **61C** is

optimized to about one quarter of the length of the wet tissue 61A before being folded. Moreover, the stacked body does not become too thick.

However, the folded wet tissue 61C composing the wet tissue stacked body shown in Fig. 16 is formed by folding the wet tissue 61A along the widthwise center line 64 and then by folding only the lower half 63 along the folding line 65. As a result, the widthwise center line of the folded wet tissue 61C is not identical to that of the unfolded wet tissue 61A. Therefore, the wet tissue has to be supplied to the folding step while being guided such that its center is widthwise shifted. This makes it difficult and seriously troublesome to adjust and stabilize the folding line at a correct position on the supply line.

At the folding step, moreover, because the center of wet tissue is liable to be offset, the center line 64 or the folding line 65 is liable to move out of position. With this discrepancy in the folding size, the overlapping area between the upper half 62 of the lower wet tissue 61C and the intermediate portion 66 of the upper wet tissues 61C fails to take one quarter of that of the unfolded wet tissue 61A accurately, so that the length of the protrusion of the wet tissue cannot be fixed. In addition, there may be such a case that the folding line 65 of the upper wet tissue and the folding line 65 of the lower wet tissue overlap each other. As a result, the central portion of the stacked body may become thick.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention has been conceived to solve the above-mentioned problems of the prior art and has an object to provide a wet tissue product in which when a wet tissue is pulled out, the protrusion of the succeeding wet tissue is appropriately small.

Another object of the invention is to provide a wet tissue product in which the protrusion of the wet tissue can always be constant.

The present invention provides a wet tissue product comprising: a stacked body of folded wet tissues; and a container or package housing the stacked body,

wherein each of the folded wet tissues is formed by folding a plane wet tissue with one edge thereof upward and the other edge thereof downward along folding line portions to have an upper folded portion, a lower folded portion and an intermediate portion between the upper and lower folded portions, and

the folded wet tissues are so consecutively combined such that the folding line portion forming the lower folded portion of the upper wet tissue is sandwiched between the upper folded portion and the intermediate portion of the succeeding lower wet tissue.

In the present invention, it is preferred that each of the folded portions has an area about one quarter as large as that of the unfolded wet tissue, or that the upper folded portion has an area about one fifth as large as that of the unfolded wet tissue whereas the lower folded portion has an area about two fifths as large as that of the unfolded wet tissue.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figs. 1(A) and 1(B) are perspective views showing a method of folding a wet tissue for an embodiment of the wet tissue product according to the invention;

Fig. 2 is a section for explaining a method of combining the folded wet tissues shown in **Fig. 1(B)**;

Fig. 3 is a section of an embodiment of the wet tissue product composed of the folded wet tissues shown in **Fig. 1(B)**;

Fig. 4 is a partially perspective view of the wet tissue product shown in **Fig. 3**;

Fig. 5 is a section showing a portion of the wet tissue stacked body shown in **Fig. 3**;

Fig. 6 is an explanatory diagram of a process for pulling out the wet tissue shown in **Fig. 5**;

Figs. 7(A) and 7(B) are perspective views showing a method of folding a wet tissue for another embodiment of the wet tissue product according to the invention;

Fig. 8 is a section for explaining a method of combining the folded wet tissues shown in **Fig. 7(B)**;

Fig. 9 is a section of another embodiment of the wet tissue product composed of the folded wet tissues shown in **Fig. 7(B)**;

Fig. 10 is a section of still another embodiment of the wet tissue product according to the invention;

Fig. 11 is a section for illustrating a protrusion of a wet tissue;

Figs. 12(A), 12(B) and 12(C) are perspective views showing a method by which a wet tissue is folded to form a stacked body according to the prior art;

Figs. 13(A) and 13(B) are perspective views showing a method by which a wet tissue is folded to form a stacked body according to the prior art;

Fig. 14 is a section showing a wet tissue stacked body according to the prior art;

Fig. 15 is a section showing a wet tissue stacked body according to the prior art; and

Fig. 16 is a section showing a wet tissue stacked body according to the prior art.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The invention will be described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Fig. 3 is a section showing an embodiment of a wet tissue product according to the invention. **Figs. 1(A)** and **1(B)** are perspective views showing a method of folding a plane wet tissue to form a folded wet tissue for the wet tissue product shown in **Fig. 3**. **Fig. 2** is a section for explaining a method of combining the folded wet tissues shown in **Fig. 1(B)**.

Here will be described a folded wet tissue **11** for the first embodiment of the wet tissue product according to the invention. The folded wet tissue **11** is formed by folding a plane wet tissue into three portions. As shown in **Fig. 1(A)**, the plane wet tissue before being folded has a rectangular shape (having a lateral dimension in the direction X and a longitudinal dimension in the direction Y). The folded wet tissue **11** is formed such that one laterally extending edge **17** is folded upward along a folding line portion **15** extending in parallel with the edge **17** and the other laterally extending edge **18** is folded downward along a folding line portion **16** extending in parallel with the edge **18**. That is, the folded wet tissue **11** is formed by folding the edges **17** and **18** to the opposite sides, along the folding line portions **15** and **16**. The folded wet tissue **11** thus obtained has a general shape of letter "Z", as shown in **Fig. 1(B)**. This folded wet tissue **11** has an upper folded portion **12**, a lower folded portion **14** and an intermediate portion **13** intervening between the folded portions **12** and **14**. Here, in this embodiment (as shown in **Figs. 1(A)** and **1(B)**), the folding line portions **15** and **16** extend in the direction X (i.e., in the lateral direction of the unfolded wet tissue), and the folding line portion **15** is spaced from the edge **17** by about one quarter of the longitudinal dimension of the plane wet tissue (i.e., unfolded wet tissue) whereas the folding line portion **16** is spaced from the edge **18** by about one quarter of the longitudinal dimension of the plane wet tissue (i.e., unfolded wet tissue). Therefore, the upper folded portion **12** and the lower folded portion **14** each have an area of about one quarter as large as that of the plane wet tissue (i.e., unfolded wet tissue).

The folded wet tissues **11** thus obtained are stacked in such a manner as shown in **Fig. 2**, such that a wet tissue stacked body **30** as shown in **Fig. 3** is provided. Here, in

order to facilitate the explanation of the stacked state, the individual folded wet tissues 11 are designated numerals 11a, 11b, 11c and 11d in an order which begins from the top of the stacked body 30.

As shown in Fig. 2, each wet tissue 11 is combined with its underlying wet tissue 11, having its folding line portion 16 sandwiched between the upper folded portion 12 and the intermediate portion 13 of the underlying wet tissue 11. For example, the folding line portion 16 of the wet tissue 11a is sandwiched between the upper folded portion 12 and the intermediate portion 13 of the wet tissue 11b, the folding line portion 16 of the wet tissue 11b is sandwiched between the upper folded portion 12 and the intermediate portion 13 of the wet tissue 11c, and the folding line portion 16 of the wet tissue 11c is sandwiched between the upper folded portion 12 and the intermediate portion 13 of the wet tissue 11d. Incidentally, as understood from Fig. 2, the wet tissues 11a and 11c having the folding line portions 16 on one side (right side) of the stacked body 30 and the wet tissues 11b and 11d having the folding line portions 16 on the other side (left side) of the stacked body 30 alternate with each other.

As described above, a plurality of the folded wet tissues 11 are consecutively combined to provide the wet tissue stacked body 30, as shown in Fig. 3. This stacked body 30 is constructed by combining a number of, e.g., fifty or one hundred wet tissues. Here, the wet tissue stacked body 30 is thinner than that of the prior art.

In Fig. 3, the wet tissue stacked body 30 is housed in a container 35 having an outlet 36 for pulling out the wet tissues, to provide the wet tissue product of the invention. Here, the bottom of the container 35 is omitted in Fig. 4, but the container 35 is sealed up excepting the outlet 36 so as to prevent the wet tissues from drying up. Further, the container 35 is generally provided with a cover (or lid) for closing (or covering around) the outlet 36 when the product is unused, although it is omitted in Fig. 4.

Before use, the outlet 36 confronts the edge 17 of the upper folded portion 12 of the uppermost folded wet tissue 11a. Upon use, this uppermost folded wet tissue 11a is pulled out from the outlet 36 by pinching its edge 17. At this time, the upper folded portion 12 of the succeeding folded wet tissue 11b is pulled up together with the intermediate portion 13 of the wet tissue 11a and then comes out of the outlet 36. That is, when the folded wet tissue 11a is pulled out from the outlet 36, the succeeding folded wet tissue 11b protrudes partially from the outlet 36 and becomes the uppermost one to be pulled out next. Then, when this protruding folded wet tissue 11b is pulled out, the succeeding folded wet tissue 11c

protrudes partially from the outlet 36 and becomes the uppermost one to be pulled out next, likewise.

As described above, in the wet tissue stacked body 30, when the uppermost wet tissue is pulled out, the succeeding wet tissue protrudes partially from the outlet 36. Here, the size of the protrusion of the succeeding wet tissue is determined by the overlapping area between the intermediate portion 13 of the uppermost wet tissue and the upper folded portion 12 of the succeeding wet tissue. In this embodiment, the size in the direction Y of the upper folded portion 12 is about one quarter as large as the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue, as shown in Fig. 1(A), so that the length (or height) of the protrusion from the outlet 36 is also equal to about one quarter as large as the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue.

Thus, when the uppermost wet tissue is pulled out, the length of the protrusion of the succeeding wet tissue is so short that the wet tissue protruding partially from the outlet 36 is difficult to dry and provides a good appearance. Furthermore, in the case where the container 35 is provided with a cover for closing the outlet 36, the protrusion of the wet tissue from the outlet 36 can be easily confined within the area of the closed cover so that the outlet 36 can be easily sealed up with the cover.

Moreover, because the individual sizes, as taken in the direction Y, of the folded portions 12 and 14 of the wet tissue 11 are about one quarter as large as the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue, the wet tissue stacked body 30 thus far described is kept in its total height away from extremely exceeding that of the stacked body of the prior art shown in Fig. 14, which is made by stacking the wet tissues all folded in two.

Fig. 4 is a partial perspective view showing the exterior of the wet tissue product of the invention, in which the stacked body 30 is housed in the container 35 as shown in Fig. 3. The outlet 36 is disposed at the substantially central portion in the upper face of the container 35. Specifically, the outlet 36 is formed at a position to confront the central portion of the faces of the folded wet tissues 11 constructing the wet tissue stacked body 30 housed in the container 35. And, the edge 17 of the uppermost wet tissue 11 appears from the outlet 36. When the user uses the wet tissue product for the first time, he or she can pull out the upper folded portion of the wet tissue 11 easily by pinching its edge 17 because the edge 17 appears in the outlet 36.

In a process for producing the wet tissue stacked body 30, a long paper band (which has a width equal to the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue shown in

Fig. 1(A)) is continuously supplied so that it is folded by means of blades along the folding line portions **15** and **16** extending along the feeding direction of the paper band. These paper bands are combined in plurality in such a manner as shown in **Fig. 2**, and are then cut to the size of each stacked body **30** (i.e., to the lateral dimension of the unfolded wet tissue).

Generally, a three-folded wet tissue is liable to have a size deviation at its folding step in the production process. Therefore, in the wet tissue stacked body of the prior art shown in **Fig. 15**, for example, it is difficult to stack them in a secure manner. In the wet tissues **11** composing the wet tissue stacked body **30** shown in **Fig. 3**, on the contrary, the center lines along the direction **X** are aligned between the wet tissues **11** before folded and after folded. Since the center lines are thus unchanged before and after the folding step, little dislocation in the direction **Y** occurs in the supply line of the paper band to the folding step so that the folding line portions can be accurately and easily adjusted by the blades to make the folding size accurate.

As compared with the three-folded wet tissue stacked body of the prior art, therefore, the wet tissue stacked body **30** can be produced easily and homogeneously as a whole. In other words, the overlapping areas can be set such that they are substantially uniform, between the intermediate portion of the upper wet tissue and the upper folded portion of the lower wet tissue. As a result, the dispersion in the length of the protrusion is reduced.

Here, the folded wet tissues **11** thus stacked are in face-to-face contact with each other through a liquid. Subsequently, these wet tissues are adhered (or engaged) considerably strong to each other by the surface tension of the intervening liquid. The adhesion (or the engaging force), which is established when the wet tissues contact in the face-to-face relation with each other through the liquid, is influenced by the differences in the roughness of the tissue surfaces and in the hydrophilic nature and water retention of fibers appearing on the tissue surfaces.

In the case where the wet tissue is made of a spun lace nonwoven fabric, for example, it has a relatively smooth and good-sliding face (of a low adhesion (or engaging force)) on one side, which is directly treated by the water jets (or water flows for interlacing the fibers) at the step of making the spun lace nonwoven fabric, and a relatively rough and less-sliding face (of a high adhesion (or engaging force)) on the other side, which is not treated by the water jets and becomes fluffy. This result likewise applies to a wet tissue which is manufactured by the wet paper making process, and the side for confronting a cylinder mold

in the paper making process becomes a relatively rough and less-sliding face (of a high adhesion (or engaging force)).

Further, there may be a wet tissue made of a nonwoven fabric having a two-layered structure composed of a layer containing more hydrophobic fibers and a layer containing more hydrophilic fibers. In this wet tissue, it is harder for the layer containing the hydrophobic fibers to retain the water so that the adhesion by the surface tension of the liquid is lowered thereby to provide a face having a relatively low adhesion (or engaging force). On the other hand, the other layer containing the hydrophilic fibers can more easily retain the water so that the adhesion by the surface tension of the liquid is enhanced thereby. As a result, a face having a relatively high adhesion (or engaging force) is provided.

When the wet tissue stacked body 30 shown in Fig. 3 is to be constructed of wet tissues each having a high adhesion face (as indicated at reference numeral 41 by solid lines in Fig. 2) and a low adhesion face (as indicated at reference numeral 40 by broken lines in Fig. 2), it is preferable that each wet tissue 11 is folded such that the intermediate portion 13 and the lower folded portion 14 are in face-to-face contact with their high adhesion faces 41 (as indicated by the solid line) opposed to each other. In short, it is preferable that the lower folded portion 14 is folded to have the high adhesion face 41 inside.

Thus, as shown in Fig. 2, the wet tissue 11a is folded such that the high adhesion face 41 of the intermediate portion 13 and the high adhesion face 41 of the lower folded portion 14 are in face-to-face contact with each other at a mating portion 50. Between the wet tissue 11a and the succeeding wet tissue 11b, on the other hand, the low adhesion face 40 of the lower folded portion 14 of the wet tissue 11a and the low adhesion face 40 of the intermediate portion 13 of the wet tissue 11b are in face-to-face contact with each other at a mating portion 51. This rule is to be repeated in the stacked body 30 so that the adhesions at the mating portions 50, 52 and 54 are stronger than those at the mating portions 51, 53 and 55.

With such a structure, when the uppermost wet tissue is pulled out, the lower folded portion 14 of the uppermost wet tissue can be easily separated from the intermediate portion 13 of the succeeding wet tissue and can be pulled out from the outlet 36 while being in close contact with the intermediate portion 13 of the uppermost wet tissue. Therefore, only the upper folded portion 12 of the succeeding wet tissue is pulled up together with the intermediate portion 13 of the uppermost wet tissue and protrudes from the outlet 36. As a result, the protrusion of the succeeding wet tissue is not excessively enlarged but is stabilized.

Moreover, because the upper folded portion **12** of the succeeding wet tissue is in face-to-face contact with the intermediate portion **13** of the uppermost wet tissue having their low adhesion faces **40** (as indicated by the broken lines) opposed to each other, the uppermost wet tissue and succeeding wet tissue can be separated relatively easily from each other at the instant when the uppermost wet tissue is wholly pulled out from the outlet **36**. Therefore, the resistance to the pull-out of the wet tissue is so low that the container **35** is not pulled up by the wet tissue being pulled out.

However, if the wet tissue is made of a nonwoven fabric having no difference in adhesion (or engaging force) between the front and back sides, it is unnecessary to consider the aforementioned combination. For example, it is preferable that the wet tissue is made of a nonwoven fabric having a three-layered structure, which is composed of two outer layers containing relatively more hydrophobic fibers and an intermediate layer containing relatively more hydrophilic fibers. If this nonwoven fabric is employed, the water present between the wet tissues is reduced due to the hydrophobic fibers so that the adhesion (or engaging force) between the wet tissues due to the surface tension of the water becomes relatively weak, on both faces of each wet tissue. Therefore, when the uppermost wet tissue is pulled out, only the upper folded portion **12** of the succeeding wet tissue (as overlapping the outlet side of the intermediate portion **13** of the uppermost wet tissue) is pulled up and protruded. However, the remaining portions are not protruded from the outlet. As a result, the wet tissues can be smoothly pulled out.

Alternatively, the wet tissue may be made of a nonwoven fabric, in which both the front and back faces are made uneven (or to have recesses). This unevenness of the wet tissue faces makes it easy for the air to enter between the confronting faces of the upper and lower wet tissues. As a result, the surface tension of water is thereby lowered such that the adhesion between the wet tissues is lowered.

Fig. 5 is a partially enlarged section showing a combined portion of the folding line portion **16** of the wet tissue **11a** and the folding line portion **15** of the wet tissue **11b** in the wet tissue stacked body **30**. In **Fig. 5**, a gap (or distance) **45** is left between the folding line portion **16** of the wet tissue **11a** and the folding line portion **15** of the wet tissue **11b**. As exemplified in **Fig. 5**, the wet tissue stacked body **30** may be formed such that a predetermined gap (or distance) **45** is set between the folding line portion **15** of the lower wet tissue and the folding line portion **16** of the upper wet tissue. In other words, the stacked body may be

formed such that the folding line portion 15 of the lower wet tissue is separated appropriately to the outside in the direction Y from the folding line portion 16 of the upper wet tissue.

Fig. 6 shows the state in which the wet tissue 11a shown in **Fig. 5** is pulled out from the outlet 36. Here, the case in which the gap 45 is formed between the folding line portion 15 of the lower wet tissue and the folding line portion 16 of the upper wet tissue, as shown in **Fig. 5** will be considered. As shown in **Fig. 6**, when the wet tissue 11a is to be pulled out from the outlet, a bulge 46 is formed between the upper folded portion 12 and the intermediate portion 13 of the succeeding wet tissue 11b. Although the wet tissues 11a and 11b are in face-to-face contact with each other, the bulge 46 can be formed because the wet tissue 11b is slackened by the gap 45 when the upper folded portion 12 and the intermediate portion 13 of the wet tissue 11b are unfolded in a general plane.

In this case, the wet tissue 11b, which is pulled up in close contact with the wet tissue 11a, is subjected at its bulge 46 to a high resistance of the outlet 36. Further, a cavity 46a is easily formed on the inner side of the bulge 46. The close contact in the wet state between the upper and lower wet tissues can be easily broken due to the presence of bulge 46 because the bulge 46 is resisted by the outlet 36 and because the air is admitted between the upper and lower wet tissues from the cavity 46a. Thus, these upper and lower wet tissues can be easily separated from each other.

As a result, the wet tissue 11b allows its upper folded portion 12 to protrude from the outlet 36 while leaving its remaining intermediate portion 13 and lower folded portion 14 in the container 35. Then, the wet tissue 11a can be taken out alone. For this effect, the gap (or distance) 45 is preferably about 3 to 8 mm, more preferably about 5 mm.

With the gap 45 being provided as described above, it is possible to separate the upper and lower wet tissues easily and to adjust the protrusion of the wet tissue from the outlet 36 without fail. Moreover, even when the wet tissue has the high adhesion faces 41 and the low adhesion faces 40, it is not necessary to consider the combination between the faces 41 and 40 aforementioned with reference to the **Fig. 2**. That is, with the gap 45 being provided, the upper and lower wet tissues can be easily separated even if the lower folded portion 14 of each wet tissue 11 is folded to have the low adhesion face 40 inside.

When the gap 45 is provided between the folding line portions, still more, the outlet 36 is preferred to exhibit the function to apply the resistance to the bulge 46. For example, the opening width of the outlet 36 is preferably made smaller than the size in the direction Y of the folded wet tissue 11. In addition, the outlet 36 may be roughed on its

peripheral edge. In short, the outlet 36 is preferably given a function as the so-called "resisting portion" to apply the resistance to the bulge 46 and to prevent the succeeding wet tissue from being dragged and protruded more than necessary from the outlet 36 by the uppermost wet tissue to be pulled out completely.

Fig. 9 is a section showing another embodiment of a wet tissue product according to the invention. **Figs. 7(A)** and **7(B)** are perspective views showing a method of folding a plane wet tissue to form a folded wet tissue for the wet tissue product shown in **Fig. 9**. **Fig. 8** is a section for explaining a method of combining the folded wet tissues shown in **Fig. 7(B)**. Hereinafter, the same components as those of the first embodiment will be described by the common reference numerals.

Fig. 7(A) shows the same rectangular plane wet tissue as that shown in **Fig. 1(A)**. A folded wet tissue 21 is obtained by folding back the edges 17 and 18 along the folding line portions 15 and 16 to the opposite sides. In the second embodiment, however, the folding line portion 15 is spaced from the edge 17 by about one fifth of the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue, but the folding line portion 16 is spaced from the edge 18 by about two fifths of the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue. Therefore, the areas of the upper folded portion 12 and the lower folded portion 14 are about one fifth and about two fifths, respectively, of that of the unfolded wet tissue shown in **Fig. 7(A)**. The folded wet tissue 21 thus obtained takes a shape of deformed letter "Z", as shown in **Fig. 7(B)**.

The folded wet tissues 21 thus obtained are stacked in such a manner as shown in **Fig. 8**, to provide a wet tissue stacked body 31 as shown in **Fig. 9**. Here, in order to facilitate the explanation of the stacked state, the individual folded wet tissues 21 are designated numerals 21a, 21b and 21c in the order from the top of the stacked body 31.

As shown in **Fig. 8**, each wet tissue 21 is combined with its underlying wet tissue 21, having its folding line portion 16 sandwiched between the upper folded portion 12 and the intermediate portion 13 of the underlying wet tissue 21. This manner is the same as that in **Fig. 2**. For example, the folding line portion 16 of the wet tissue 21a is sandwiched between the upper folded portion 12 and the intermediate portion 13 of the wet tissue 21b.

In **Fig. 9**, the wet tissue stacked body 31 is housed in the container 35 having the outlet 36 to provide the wet tissue product of the second embodiment according to the invention. This outlet 36 is confronted by the edge 17 of the upper folded portion 12 of the uppermost wet tissue 21a. This uppermost wet tissue 21a is pulled out from the outlet 36 by pinching the edge 17. Then, the upper folded portion 12 of the succeeding wet tissue 21b is

pulled up toward the outlet **36** together with the intermediate portion **13** of the uppermost wet tissue **21a** so that the upper folded portion **12** of the succeeding wet tissue **21b** protrudes from the outlet **36**.

In the wet tissue stacked body **31**, as shown in **Fig. 9**, the length of the protrusion of the wet tissue can be made shorter to about one fifth of the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue. Further, the width of the folded wet tissue **21**, as taken in the direction Y, is about two fifths of the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue. Therefore, the wet tissue product can be made slim as a whole.

In the case where the wet tissue stacked body **31** is composed of wet tissues each having the high adhesion face **41** and the low adhesion face **40**. Furthermore, it is preferred that each wet tissue **21** is folded such that the intermediate portion **13** and the lower folded portion **14** are in face-to-face contact with their high adhesion faces **41** (as indicated by the solid line) opposed to each other. In short, it is preferable that the lower folded portion **14** is folded to have the high adhesion face **41** inside. Subsequently, the length of the protrusion of the wet tissue **21** can be one fifth of the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue reliably. The size in the direction Y of the lower folded portion **14** of the wet tissue **21** is as long as about two fifths of the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue. However, the lower folded portion **14** of the upper wet tissue is in contact with the intermediate portion **13** of the lower wet tissue with their low adhesion faces **40** opposed to each other, as shown in **Fig. 8**, such that the upper and lower wet tissues can be easily separated, while the upper wet tissue is pulled out from the outlet **36** with its intermediate portion **13** and lower folded portion **14** being in close contact. Therefore, when the uppermost wet tissue is pulled out, only the upper folded portion **12** of the succeeding next wet tissue is protruded from the outlet **36**.

Moreover, the wet tissue stacked body **31** may be formed such that a predetermined gap (or distance) **45** is set between the folding line portion **15** of the lower wet tissue and the folding line portion **16** of the upper wet tissue. This is accomplished in the same manner as in the stacked body **30** which has been described above with reference to **Figs. 5 and 6**. As a result, the length of the protrusion can be about one fifth of the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue, without adjusting the combination of the high and low adhesion faces.

Fig. 10 is a section showing still another embodiment of the wet tissue product of the invention. The wet tissue product shown in **Fig. 10** is obtained by housing the wet

tissue stacked body 30 shown in Fig. 3 upside down in the container 35. The stacked body thus housed upside down in the container 35 is designated by reference numeral 32. In this wet tissue stacked body 32, the wet tissue at the lowermost position in the stacked body 30 confronts the outlet 36 and becomes the uppermost wet tissue designated by reference numeral 11z. Then, the underlying wet tissue positioned second from the top is designated by reference numeral 11y. As shown in Fig. 10, the folded portion 14 of the wet tissue 11z confronts the outlet 36, and the folding line portion 16 of the wet tissue 11y is sandwiched between the folded portion 12 and the intermediate portion 13 of the wet tissue 11z.

When the uppermost wet tissue 11z is pulled out from the outlet 36, the folded portion 14 and the about half of the intermediate portion 13 of the succeeding wet tissue 11y is pulled up together with the folded portion 12 of the wet tissue 11z to be protruded from the outlet 36. At this time, as shown in Fig. 11, the wet tissue 11y partially protrudes such that the folding line portion 16 makes a crest while the edge 18 is left in the container 35. Then, the length of the protrusion is about or less than one quarter of the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue. In this case, moreover, the folded portion 14 and the intermediate portion 13 forming the protrusion are apt to separate from each other to form a loop. This looped protrusion provides a good appearance.

When the wet tissue stacked body 32 is composed of wet tissues each having the high and low adhesion faces 41 and 40, it is preferred that each wet tissue 21 is folded such that the intermediate portion 13 and the folded portion 14 are in face-to-face contact with their high adhesion faces 41 opposed to each other. In short, it is preferable that the folded portion 14 is folded to have the high adhesion face 41 inside. The combination between the high adhesion face 41 and the low adhesion face 40 at this time is identical to that in the wet tissue stacked body 30 shown in Figs. 2 and 3.

In this case, the intermediate portion 13 of the wet tissue 11z confronts the folded portion 14 of the wet tissue 11y with their low adhesion faces 40 opposed to each other, and the folded portion 12 of the wet tissue 11z confronts the intermediate portion 13 of the wet tissue 11y with their low adhesion faces 40 opposed to each other. On the other hand, the folded portion 14 and the intermediate portion 13 of the wet tissue 11y are confronted with their high adhesion faces 41 opposed to each other. Therefore, when the wet tissue 11z is pulled out, the folded portion 14 of the wet tissue 11y is protruded from the outlet 36 while being kept in face-to-face contact with the intermediate portion 13 of the wet tissue 11y.

Then, the wet tissue 11z is easily separated, when it comes out from the outlet 36 from the wet tissue 11y.

On the other hand, the wet tissue stacked body 32 may be composed of wet tissues each having two low adhesion faces, in place of the aforementioned wet tissues each having the high and low adhesion faces.

When the wet tissue is to be protruded as shown in Fig. 11, it is preferable that the distance between the edge 18 of the lower wet tissue and the edge 17 of the upper wet tissue is adjusted so that the edge 18 of the lower wet tissue may be left without fail in the container 35. For example, it is preferable that the edge 18 of the lower wet tissue is closer to the central portion of the stacked body 32 than the edge 17 of the upper wet tissue. In the wet tissue stacked body 32, as shown in Fig. 10, the edge 17 of the uppermost wet tissue 11z is spaced by a distance 47 from the edge 18 of the succeeding wet tissue 11y. When the wet tissue 11z is pulled out, the folded portion 14 and the intermediate portion 13 of the wet tissue 11y are protruded from the outlet 36 exclusively at the portion located on the lefthand side relative to the edge 17 of the wet tissue 11z in Fig. 10. In other words, the folded portion 14 of the wet tissue 11y is left in the container at the portion indicated by the distance 47 from the edge 18. The distance 47 is preferably 3mm or more, more preferably 5 mm or more.

In the wet tissue stacked body 32 shown in Fig. 10, moreover, it is preferred that substantially no gap (or distance) between the folding line portions 15 of the upper wet tissue and the folding line portions 16 of the lower wet tissue is provided. If such a gap as shown in Fig. 5 is provided in the stacked body 32, a bulge will be formed at the upper wet tissue to make it difficult to pull out the wet tissue smoothly.

In order to protrude the wet tissue as shown in Fig. 11, further, the wet tissue stacked body 31 shown in Fig. 9 may be housed upside down in the container with its lower folded portion confronting the outlet.

The aforementioned wet tissues 11 and 21 are made of a nonwoven fabric or paper composed of natural fibers and/or synthetic fibers. For example, use can be made of a spun lace nonwoven fabric made of polyethylene or polypropylene and having a high wet strength. The size of the unfolded wet tissue, as shown in Figs. 1(A) and 7(A), is exemplified by about 150 x 200 mm, although it can be suitably changed depending upon the size of the container or package. The wet tissues 11 and 21 are impregnated with water, alcohol, humectants, surface active agents, perfumes, antiseptics, mildewcides or the like.

The container **35** is made from a relatively hard synthetic resin such as polyethylene, polypropylene or the like. The outlet **36** is preferably provided with a cover for closing (covering around) the outlet **36** so as to seal up the container **35** and prevent the protruded wet tissue from drying up. Alternatively, instead of the hard container **35**, a package (or envelope) of a liquid-impermeable film may be used to house the wet tissue stacked body. In addition, the wet tissue product of the invention can also be used as the so-called "refill package", in which the wet tissue stacked body housed in the package is further housed in a hard container.

In the wet tissue stacked body of the invention, however, there will be a more or less dispersion in size at the folding step of the production process. The folding line portions **15** and **16** are not always located accurately at one quarter or one fifth and two fifths of the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue from the edges, but may be located at less than or about one quarter or one fifth and two fifths of the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue.

In the wet tissue stacked body of the invention, moreover, the length of the protrusion can be adjusted in accord with demand by adjusting the locations of the folding line portions **15** and **16**. Therefore, the folding line portions **15** and **16** may be located at one third or one sixth of the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue from the edges, for example. However, the length of the protrusion of the wet tissue in the general use is preferably one quarter or less of the longitudinal dimension of the unfolded wet tissue. In addition, when the folding line portions **15** and **16** are located as in the aforementioned embodiments, the individual folded portions of the wet tissue are divided to the right and left of the stacked body so that the stacked body is well shaped to provide a good appearance.

While in the foregoing specification this invention has been described in relation to preferred embodiments and many details have been set forth for purpose of illustration it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that the invention is susceptible to additional embodiments and that certain of the details described herein can be varied considerably without departing from the basic principles of the invention.

Further, 'comprises/comprising' when used in this specification is taken to specify the presence of stated features, integers, steps or components but does not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, components or groups thereof.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A wet tissue product comprising: a stacked body of folded wet tissues; and one of a container and package for housing the stacked body,

wherein each of the folded wet tissues is formed by folding a plane wet tissue with one edge thereof upward and another edge thereof downward along folding line portions to have an upper folded portion, a lower folded portion and an intermediate portion between the upper and lower folded portions, and

the folded wet tissues are consecutively combined such that a folding line portion forming the lower folded portion of an upper wet tissue is sandwiched between the upper folded portion and the intermediate portion of a succeeding lower wet tissue.

2. The wet tissue product according to Claim 1, wherein:

each folded portion has an area about one quarter as large as that of an unfolded wet tissue.

3. The wet tissue product according to Claim 2, wherein:

each wet tissue has one face which has a low adhesion and another face which has a high adhesion, and the lower folded portion is folded that the high adhesion side faces inward.

4. The wet tissue product according to Claim 2, wherein:

the folding line portion forming the lower folded portion of the upper wet tissue and the folding line portion forming the upper folded portion of the lower wet tissue are arranged to have a predetermined gap.

5. The wet tissue product according to Claim 4, wherein:

the gap is about 3 to 8 mm.

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6. The wet tissue product according to Claim 2, wherein:
one of the container and package has an outlet, and the stacked body of wet tissues is housed in one of the container and package such that the upper folded portion faces toward the outlet.
7. The wet tissue product according to Claim 2, wherein:
one of the container and package has an outlet, and the stacked body of wet tissues is housed in one of the container and package such that the lower folded portion faces toward the outlet.
8. The wet tissue product according to Claim 1, wherein:
the upper folded portion has an area about one fifth as large as that of an unfolded wet tissue, and the lower folded portion has an area about two fifths as large as that of the unfolded wet tissue.
9. The wet tissue product according to Claim 8, wherein:
each wet tissue has one face having a low adhesion and another face having a high adhesion, and the lower folded portion is folded such that the high adhesion faces inward.
10. The wet tissue product according to Claim 8, wherein:
the folding line portion which forms the lower folded portion of the upper wet tissue and the folding line portion which forms the upper folded portion of the lower wet tissue are arranged such to have a predetermined gap.
11. The wet tissue product according to Claim 10, wherein:
the gap is about 3 to 8 mm.
12. The wet tissue product according to Claim 8, wherein:
one of the container and package has an outlet, and the stacked body of wet tissues is housed in one of the container and package such that the upper folded portion faces toward the outlet.

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13. The wet tissue product according to Claim 8, wherein:

one of the container and package has an outlet, and the stacked body of wet tissues is housed in one of the container and package such that the lower folded portion faces toward the outlet.

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