

The White Socks

Category: The Exam Room

written by R. Lynn Barnett | September 11, 2025

No, that title is not a misspelling of Chicago's baseball team, the White Sox, but the germ of an idea that started with literal white socks. When I was a teenager, kids could be critical. Heaven forbid if you wore white socks with blue slacks, like blue jeans. Oh, the horror!

Thankfully, time marched on, and recently I was sitting in an exam room with my husband, wearing blue slacks and white socks. A health-care professional walked in, and she was wearing blue scrubs and white socks. That exam room visit led to a hospital stay for my husband. As I was sitting in the hospital waiting room, I noticed that all of us in one corner of the space were wearing blue slacks and white socks. How refreshing.

But the term "white socks," and by extension White Sox, does remind me of some baseball terms and analogies. As I was waiting to speak to a doctor, in order to pass the time, I read an article about our national pastime: baseball. It was entitled "Sox Gets Colón," with an accent over the second "o." But I misinterpreted it as "Socks Gets Colon." (I guess since the doc visit involved a possible colonoscopy, I had colons on the brain, so to speak.) I thought, "Socks gets colon? What's next? Dress gets pancreas?"

In baseball, a runner wants the umpire to say "Safe." In a hospital setting, we all want to feel safe. In baseball, a player wants a home run. During my husband's hospital stay, I had to run home to check on things at home plate. In baseball, players are running rings around a diamond. In life, a diamond ring comes with responsibilities, including running to the hospital nurses' station, the cafeteria, etc.

One difference is that in baseball, a batter doesn't want to hear "You're out," but it's great when "you're out" of the hospital. For eight days and eight nights, I hardly saw the light of day, wanting to stay with hubby while he was recuperating. We both really appreciated that first burst of fresh air when he was discharged.

I have a friend who likes to bake, especially when dealing with stress, such as health issues. She said stirring the cake batter was a nice diversion; it provided a sense of serenity. "Batter up."

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