



Girls, women who are unusually short have trouble finding the right clothes: Events in Style

by [Sarah Crump/Plain Dealer Reporter](#)

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Like many teens, Hannah Hovan has trouble finding jeans that fit.

"I really just have to dig through them," she says.

But at 5 feet, she digs a little deeper for those size 3 jeans that usually have to be hemmed. And the champagne strapless Jessica McClintock dress the North Canton 17-year-old wore to her homecoming dance fell a few inches below the knee instead of being knee-length, as advertised.

No problem, said Hannah, who took a growth hormone to reach her height. "It fits really well. I just love it."

She has Turner Syndrome, a chromosomal malady that limits female height to a maximum of 4 feet 8 inches unless treated hormonally at an early age.

Hannah's specialist, Dr. Catherine Ward Melver, a geneticist at Akron Children's Hospital, has put together a conference on Saturday for girls and women with Turner Syndrome.

It will be a day of serious medical discussion, but Melver wanted to add something fun. So enter Kim Williams Dahlman, the Casselberry, Fla., author of "The Petite Handbook," who will give plenty of tips for dressing a shorter frame.

Molver was diagnosed at age 7 with Turner Syndrome, a condition that occurs in one of 2,500 live female births, but was born before growth hormones were used. People assumed she was younger than her age. Now 4 feet 8 inches at age 35, she wears a white lab coat that makes such assumptions less common.

"Dress your age, not your size," Melver, a size 2, advises her patients. However, finding size 5 shoes is tough for the doctor who, during the surgical rotation of her internship, had to stand on a platform to assist in operations.

Shopping persistence and laughter help, she says. "You just have to have a sense of humor about it. A lot of people are short."

Her patient Alyssa Kincaid agrees. Her aunt bought her a pair of capri pants that ended at her ankles. "I think that's about the worst thing that's happened," says the upbeat 15-year-old who is almost 4 feet 8 inches tall.

One of Dahlman's short friends wears capris all the time, but the short pants are full-length on her. "She looks great," said the author, who also wears petite sizes. "There isn't much we can't wear as long as we put it together in a flattering way."

See more in [Events](#)



Tiffany Swift

Finding a wedding gown when you're 4 feet 8 inches tall is a challenge, but Dr. Catherine Ward Melver, a geneticist at Akron Children's Hospital, sent her measurements to Casablanca Bridal, a made-to-order company.

What: "Hot Topics in Turner Syndrome."

When: 9 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 17.

Where: William H. Considine Professional Building, Akron Children's Hospital, One Perkins Square, Akron.

Cost: Free, but registration is required.

Contact: Call Angela Eaton at the Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology at 330-543-3047 or [e-mail](#) her.

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