

KING'S LYNN

Campaign to help spot the signs of dangerous attacks

By MEGAN RUSSELL

Doctors and nursing staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn will be publicising the dangers of hypoglycaemia later this month by taking part in the first ever national Hypo Awareness Week.

The condition – which occurs in some diabetics when their blood sugar levels drop below a certain point – can cause faintness, sweating and difficulty speaking, and if ignored can result in fitting and loss of consciousness.

An attack can cause sufferers to become lost, even in familiar surroundings, and if the person is driving and does not recognise the symptoms of the attack quickly enough to pull off the road, they could lose control of the vehicle.

There will be displays around the front of the hospital to help people learn how to spot these signs, and also how to treat a hypo – as these attacks are commonly known.

The hospital is hoping that the week will make it easier for people to recognise the symptoms, which can include becoming glassy-eyed or pale with slurred speech and an air of confusion – symptoms that are often



Picture:
MATTHEW USHER

AWARENESS: The diabetics team at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn launch a hypo awareness week. From left, Sarah Fletcher, Alirae Bunkle, Rebecca Hayes, Matt Williams, Vicki Brindle, Jane Little and Elizabeth Laws.

mistaken for being drunk.

Alirae Bunkle, diabetes specialist nurse at the QEH, said: "A lot of people think that chocolate is a good way to get sugar in to the bloodstream but it's not quick enough. We tell patients the best thing to eat is about six jelly babies and a couple of digestive biscuits.

"It really can be debilitating," she said. "People don't realise, but it can affect you at work, when you're driving, even family life. Hypo Awareness Week gives us the opportunity to raise this issue both with hospital staff and the general public."

Matt Williams, a member of the

diabetics team at the QEH who is also a sufferer, said: "I've woken up at night before asking my wife what bells were just ringing – and who the other women in our bed were."

■ Around 5pc of the population is believed to be diabetic. Hypo Awareness Week runs from Monday, August 13, to Sunday, August 19.