

HOW TO HELP

If you are concerned about your own gambling, or if you are worried about someone you care about, you can get help or just get answers to your questions by calling:

ONTARIO PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE

at 1-888-230-3505

Confidential, anonymous,
free and open 24 hours.



Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline
La Ligne ontarienne d'aide sur le jeu problématique

For more information
on low-risk gambling, visit the
Responsible Gambling Council
website at
www.responsiblegambling.org

And remember, "it's only a game."



The Responsible Gambling Council Focused Firmly on Prevention

The Responsible Gambling Council is an independent, non-profit organization committed to problem gambling prevention. RGC designs and delivers highly effective awareness programs. The Council promotes the identification and adoption of best practices in problem gambling prevention through research and information dissemination.



It's
only
a Game

**A QUICK GUIDE
TO LOW-RISK
GAMBLING**



www.responsiblegambling.org



RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING COUNCIL

UNDERSTANDING THE GAME

More and more people are gambling every year. They play casino games, go to the track, buy lottery tickets, bet on sports events, try their luck at bingo, or play some other game of chance. While most gambling doesn't hurt anyone, some people do become "hooked" on gambling, just as some people become "hooked" on alcohol. Because they can't stop betting, these problem gamblers often lose all their money, and ruin their relationships with friends and family.

Low-risk gambling is a way of playing with very little chance of losing control. The key to low-risk gambling is to realize that "it's only a game."



TIPS FOR LOW-RISK GAMBLING

Low-risk gamblers understand that, while they may get lucky from time to time, over the long run they will lose money. They know that the games work that way.

Low-risk gamblers look at gambling as a form of entertainment, not as a way to make money. For them, a small gambling loss is the cost of a night's entertainment, just like the cost of a movie ticket or a restaurant bill.

Low-risk gamblers follow these tips:

- decide on a loss limit ahead of time and stick to it
- never borrow money to gamble
- set a time limit
- take frequent breaks
- balance gambling with other activities
- only gamble with money set aside for entertainment, never with money for everyday expenses
- don't gamble when highly stressed, depressed or troubled in some other way

SIGNS OF TROUBLE

Problem gamblers lose the sense that it's only a game. They may begin to look at gambling as a way to make money. They often think that they have special luck or abilities. When they lose money, they tend to "chase their losses," betting even more to win back money that has been lost. The result is a vicious circle of increasing losses and increasing bets.

These are some signs of problem gambling:

- spending increasing periods of time gambling
- being preoccupied with gambling
- spending increasing amounts of money
- "chasing losses"
- borrowing money to gamble
- increasing debt because of gambling
- engaging in fraud or theft to finance gambling
- lying to cover up gambling
- neglecting work, family or friends
- gambling to escape from obligations or life's daily pressures

TAKE STOCK: GENERAL SIGNS OF A POTENTIAL GAMBLING PROBLEM

Each person's experience is different, but here are some signs of a potential gambling problem. The more boxes you tick, the greater the chance of a problem.

Do you ever...

- Lie about how much time or money you've spent gambling?
- Borrow money or sell things to get money to gamble?
- Skip work, family functions or other obligations to gamble?
- Gamble to escape boredom or problems at home or work?
- Gamble in order to win back losses?
- Need to gamble with larger amounts of money, or for a longer period of time, to get that same feeling of excitement?
- Argue with your spouse, partner or family about money and gambling?
- Hide bills, 'past due notices', winnings or losses from your partner or family member?
- Feel that a 'big win' will solve all of your problems?
- Bet until the last dollar is gone?
- Neglect to sleep or eat properly so you have more time to gamble?



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Toll-free, confidential, anonymous,
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For more information about safer gambling, or to find out more about local resources for help with gambling-related problems, please visit:

www.responsiblegambling.org



It's
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**A QUICK GUIDE
TO SAFER GAMBLING
FOR OLDER PEOPLE**



RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING COUNCIL

PLAYING THE GAME

Many people gamble. They play slot machines or bingo, buy scratch tickets or lottery tickets or they go to the racetrack. And most people don't get into trouble with gambling—but some do. How do you keep your gambling safer? And how do you spot a potential problem? Your 'gambling style' can provide valuable clues.

High-Risk or Low-Risk?

Some people who gamble lose the sense that it's only a game. They may start to see gambling as a way to make money. Or they think they have special luck or abilities. When they lose, they bet more and more to try to win back what's been lost. These practices can increase the risk of a gambling problem.

People who gamble in a low-risk way see gambling as a form of entertainment. For them, a gambling loss is the cost of entertainment—just like the cost of a restaurant bill or a theatre ticket.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ADD RETIREMENT TO THE MIX?

When you retire, things change: you have more free time and you probably have a new budget. During any life transition, it's easy to lose your bearings and to feel out of touch. The research tells us that gambling at times like these can raise the risk of getting into trouble. The risks are even greater if you have gambled a lot in the past.

2.2% of Ontario adults 60+ have a moderate to severe gambling problem. For these people, gambling losses can have a substantial impact on their finances and their lives. When you are older and, perhaps, on a fixed income, there's no way to re-coup what you've lost.

Gambling Tips From People Who Have Been There

The Responsible Gambling Council (RGC) conducted a study of older adults with a gambling problem. They provided some solid advice:

“Don't look at gambling as your main source of entertainment.”

Keep your life balanced with different activities. Some of the older adults we spoke to found themselves gambling more often simply because they had more time on their hands.

“Take stock of your gambling.”

Every once in a while, give yourself a gambling reality check. Many of the older adults with a gambling problem said 'it can creep up on you.' Make sure you aren't gambling in a high risk way and be aware of the signs of a problem. If you want some help, there are many places to get it.

KEEPING IT LOW-RISK

“It's your money—take care of it.”

The older adults we spoke to were very clear: it's our money, we worked hard for it and we'll spend it how we like. But they also told us that spending too much money on gambling can lead to a loss of control and can affect how you feel about yourself. If you choose to gamble, decide how much you can afford to lose. If you reach that point—it's time to call it a day.



If you choose to gamble, keep it low-risk

No matter what age you are, the principles of safer gambling are always the same.

- Set money and time limits and stick to them
- Only use money you can afford to lose
- Take frequent breaks
- Balance gambling with other activities
- Don't borrow money to gamble
- Don't try to win back what's been lost
- Be particularly careful when you are upset, stressed or depressed

HOW DO I BRING IT UP?

Here are some tips for raising the issue with your son or daughter:

Look for a time to raise the topic naturally, for example, after seeing a commercial for a casino or finding out that a friend has won or lost money.

Ask questions first. Explore your child's own ideas and feelings about gambling before giving information or offering your own opinions.

Gambling is a topic full of contradictions for youth. Be specific when you talk about gambling and about your own values.

Be patient. It may take several discussions before your child understands the ideas that you want to convey.

If you would like more information, visit the Responsible Gambling Council Website at

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Why It's
Important
to
talk
to your
teens
about
Gambling

AND HOW TO DO IT



www.responsiblegambling.org



RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING COUNCIL

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Teens are exposed to gambling images almost every day. All they have to do is walk into a corner store that sells lottery tickets or turn on the TV to see a poker tournament.

Several studies have shown that three to four per cent of teenagers who gamble experience gambling problems. Once they reach the age of 18, the risk of developing a gambling problem will almost double.

Youth do not see gambling as risky. While teens receive numerous prevention and awareness messages on a variety of topics, many are unaware of, or not concerned about, the potential risks associated with gambling.

Teens are only a few years away from gambling legally. It is essential to provide your teen with problem gambling prevention information now—when gambling-related attitudes and behaviours are being formed. Many teens are already actively involved in gambling activities. It may be a bet of a dollar or two over a hockey or card game, but it can be a lot more serious.

HOW DO I PROTECT THEM?

Teens who understand that gambling has risks are less likely to develop a gambling problem. Parents can help protect their kids by talking with them about those risks.

Parents who have never raised the topic with their teens may not realize that they are already communicating some sort of message about gambling through their own behaviour: Parents may buy lottery tickets, play bingo, or visit casinos and seem to enjoy the experience; they may not gamble at all, either out of moral conviction or because they just aren't interested; they may spend too much money gambling and regret it afterwards.

As a parent, it is important to realize the impact your own attitudes and behaviour have on your children.

Talking with your teen about gambling is a way to make sure that you are communicating exactly what you want to get across.

WHAT DO THEY NEED TO KNOW?

Gambling is not a way to make money. Gambling establishments are set up to take in more money than they pay out. This means over time, people will lose more money than they win.

All forms of gambling—slot machines, lotteries, online poker games, etc.— have the same principle. The vast majority of gamblers will lose so that a very small minority can have big wins.

Virtually all people with gambling problems hold the false expectation that they are the ones who will be the big winners.

Gambling can lead to serious problems. Research shows that youth see gambling as “fun”, “cool” and “exciting”. Teens need to recognize that gambling can get out of control. It can lead to serious consequences like the obvious loss of money and personal possessions. It can also lead to the not-so-obvious losses: feelings of self-worth, opportunities for education, as well as the trust and respect of family and friends.

understanding

communicating

it's only
a game



risks

Did You Know ...

Research shows the earlier people start gambling, the more likely they are to develop a gambling problem.

A casino visit has been described as the new rite of passage into adulthood, similar to getting a driver's licence or gaining access into bars.