

Gambling can be particularly risky for older people who are going through major life transitions such as retirement, loss of a loved one, moving, or health problems.

Gambling can even be risky for those who simply spend a lot of time gambling and do not stay involved in other activities.

### Possible **Signs** of a **Gambling Problem**

- Gambling more often for more money,
- Gambling for longer periods of time,
- Gambling in spite of negative consequences, such as large losses, or family problems, and
- Gambling as a means to cope with the loss of loved ones, retirement, or loneliness.

### Help?

There is help available for problem/compulsive gamblers. If you think you or someone else has a gambling problem, call the National Problem Gambling Helpline for free, confidential information.

**24 Hour  
Toll Free  
Assistance  
1-800-522-4700**



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# Gambling Among Older Adults Recreation with Risk?

*“We have been  
retired two years  
and I just found out my  
husband has gambled  
away all of our  
retirement savings.”*

—A 68-year-old  
Helpline caller

**G**ambling in the United States has changed significantly over the past several years. It is more accessible than ever before and it is marketed to older people.

## Recreation?

For most older people, gambling is a social or recreational activity. It is fun and entertaining. It does not cause problems.

For these older people who choose to gamble recreationally, the following information is essential to help insure that their gambling does not lead to problems:

1. Recreational gambling is most often combined with other activities and done socially with family, friends, or colleagues.  
**Always gamble with others and not alone.**

*“I cashed all of my IRAs and have maxed all of my credit cards.”*

—A 60-year-old retired male Helpline caller

2. Recreational gambling is done for limited amounts of time. **Set limits on how often and for how long you gamble.**
3. Recreational gambling always has pre-determined limits for losses that are acceptable. **Remember money spent on gambling needs to be considered entertainment.**
4. Over time nearly everyone who gambles loses. **The benefit of gambling is almost always recreational and rarely a financial gain.**

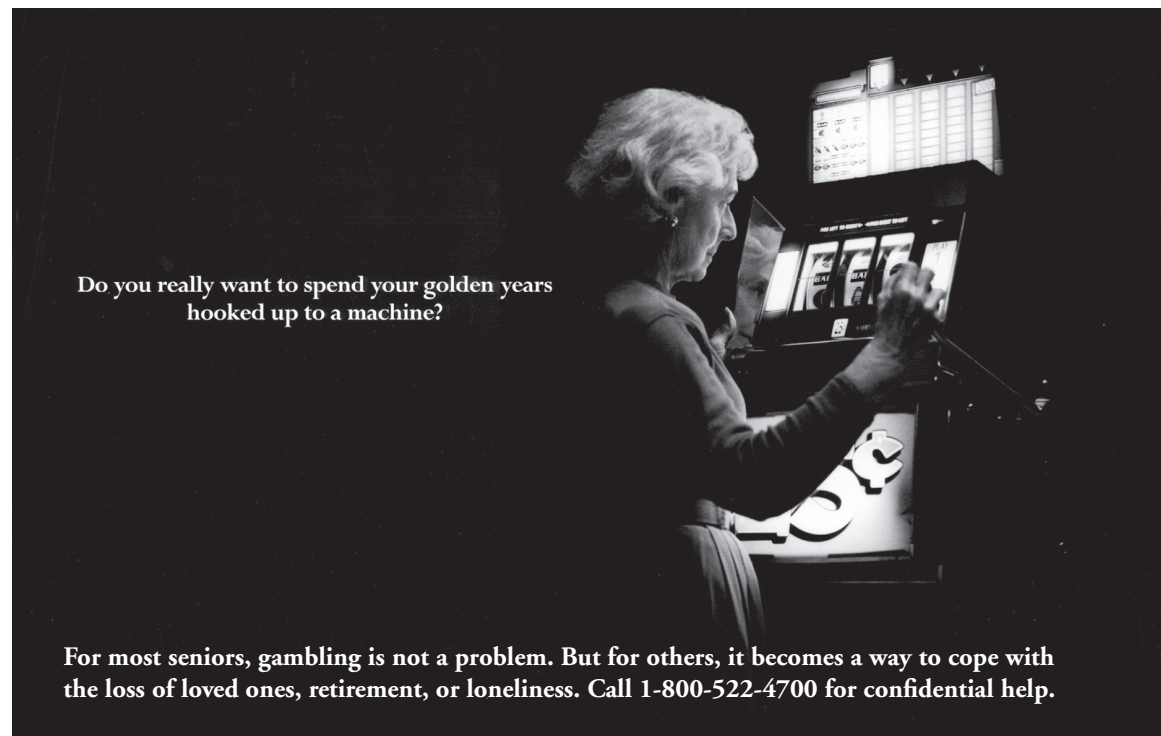
People who are aware of this information and follow these suggestions can significantly reduce their risk of developing a gambling problem.

## Risks?

For many older people living on fixed incomes, gambling losses can significantly affect their standard of living.

*“My mother no longer has time for her grandchildren because she gambles so much.”*

—A Helpline caller concerned about her 71-year-old mother



Do you really want to spend your golden years hooked up to a machine?

For most seniors, gambling is not a problem. But for others, it becomes a way to cope with the loss of loved ones, retirement, or loneliness. Call 1-800-522-4700 for confidential help.