

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 poor academic performance, and
- Gambling as a means to cope with loneliness, anxiety or depression.

“My mom went gambling and didn’t come home in time to take me to high school orientation. Now I won’t know where my locker is on the first day of school.”

—A 9th grade
Helpline caller

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 Youth Recreation with Risk?

“I’ve been gambling for less than a year and my parents don’t know. I’ve maxed out a couple credit cards.”

—An 18-year-old female
Helpline caller

Gambling in the United States has changed significantly over the past several years. It is more accessible than ever before, extensively marketed and is creating problems for many youth.

Recreation?

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

1. Over time nearly everyone who gambles loses. The benefit of gambling is almost always recreational and rarely a financial gain.
2. Recreational gambling is most often combined with other activities and done socially with family, friends, or colleagues. Always gamble with others and not alone.

“My 16-year-old daughter altered her ID to gain entrance into bars to play pull-tabs.”

—A 40-year-old male
Helpline caller

3. Recreational gambling is done for limited amounts of time. Set limits on how often and for how long you gamble.
4. Recreational gambling always has predetermined limits for losses that are acceptable. Remember money spent on gambling needs to be considered entertainment.

Youth who are aware of this information and follow the suggestions above can significantly reduce their risk of developing a gambling problem.

Risks?

- Today’s youth are the first to grow up in a society where legalized gambling is an acceptable form of entertainment.
- Gambling has become a new rite of passage for many youth. It is no longer limited to the Saturday night poker game or the annual Super Bowl pool. As young people reach the legal gambling age, they are suddenly able to buy lottery tickets and enter a casino.

- Gambling problems affecting youth occur in a variety of environments: schools, home or on the bus. Some are part of a compulsive gambling problem. Others are the result of foolish and risky adolescent behavior.
- Gambling can be risky for those who spend a lot of time gambling and do not stay involved in other activities.
- Youth can also be affected by their parents or guardians gambling. Often neglect or abuse and loneliness result from this problem behavior.

