



Problem gambling: The warning signs

Who or what is a problem gambler?

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Is preoccupied with gambling, reliving gambling experiences, or thinking of ways to get money to gamble. 2 Needs to gamble with a larger pot of money in order to achieve the desired level of excitement. 3 Tries repeatedly but fails to control, cut back, or stop gambling. 4 Becomes restless or irritable when attempting to scale back or stop gambling. 5 Gambles as a way to escape from family or work problems or to relieve a depressed or unhappy mood. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6 After losing money, often returns another day to get even. 7 Lies to family members, therapists, colleagues, or others to conceal the extent of the gambling habit. 8 Has committed illegal acts like forgery, fraud, theft, or embezzlement to finance gambling habit. 9 Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of the need to gamble. 10 Borrows money from friends, family, even strangers to pay off debts from gambling. |
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PHASES OF PROBLEM GAMBLING

**Preoccupation
WINNING
Escalation** →

**Trying to stop
LOSING
Escape** →

**Chasing
DESPARATION
Lying** →

**Alienation
HOPELESS**

How to test if you are a problem gambler

If you answer 'yes' to five (or more) of the following questions, then you are more than likely to have a gambling problem.

1. Are you having problems in controlling, cutting back, or stopping yourself from gambling?
2. Do you feel resentful, angry, or irritable when attempting to cut back or stop gambling?
3. Do you gamble to escape from problems or feelings of resentment, stress, boredom, guilt, anxiety or depression?
4. Have you ever gambled to get money to solve your financial problems?
5. After losing money gambling, do you often return to gambling to chase your losses?
6. After a win, do you have a strong urge to return to win more?
7. Do you find that you need increasing amounts of money to achieve the desired satisfaction?
8. Do you ever gamble longer than you planned?
9. Did you ever gamble until your last dollar was gone?
10. Have you ever relied on others for money lost through gambling?
11. Did gambling affect your reputation, or jeopardise a significant relationship, career, or educational opportunity?
12. Do you lie to family members, counsellors, or others to conceal the extent of your gambling?

**Overcoming a gambling problem is not easy,
it can take many attempts to be successful**



So, what are the warning signs to look out for in a problem gambler?

Unexplained absences. Misses school, work or other appointments or meetings.	substances. Becomes restless or irritable when attempting to scale back or stop gambling.	educational or career opportunity because of the need to gamble.	These groups include people who are depressed, lonely, trying to win money to pay off debts, escaping from problems, from low socio-economic areas, or have other compulsions. They are at greater risk if they start to gamble.
Is preoccupied with gambling, reliving gambling experiences, or thinking of ways to get money to gamble.	Gambles as a way to escape from family or work problems or to relieve a depressed or unhappy mood.	Borrows money from friends, family, even strangers to pay off catastrophic debts from gambling.	
No longer pays bills on time.	Applies for new credit cards.	Who is at risk? Problem gambling develops quickly. Between 1 and 7% of the population are problem gamblers. There are serious outcomes for this group, which often includes their loss of house, job and life.	People who start to gamble and have a 'big win' can have unrealistic expectations about gambling.
Needs to gamble with a larger pot of money in order to achieve the desired level of excitement.	After losing money, often returns another day to get even.	People who regularly play 'pokies' are more likely to develop problems.	The bottom line is that the house will always win and the odds are always in their favour.
Shows signs of stress, such as headaches and stomach problems. Has more extreme high and low moods.	Lies to family members, therapists, colleagues, or others to conceal the extent of the gambling habit.	More vulnerable groups are often more at risk.	There is no skill involved when playing the pokies.
Tries repeatedly, but fails to control, cut back, or stop gambling.	Has committed illegal acts like forgery, fraud, theft, or embezzlement to finance their gambling habit.		
Starts gambling after giving up cigarettes, alcohol or other	Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job,		

What can you do to help?

- Talk to the person and tell them how you feel about their gambling. Don't accuse or blame.
- Be a good listener. Let them share with you without passing judgment. They may not feel they have a problem or they may be thankful for the chance to finally talk.
- Be supportive. Offer ways to help them quit by spending time with them that doesn't involve gambling.
- Set up accounts that need two signatures.
- Help them make a plan and come up with ideas to take back control.
- Help them to put a self-exclusion order/ programme in place so they can't enter casinos or venues.
- Suggest help seeking through treatment services.
- Call a gambling helpline and get advice on what the best way is to support a problem gambler.
- Do not give them money.

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**Problem Gambling Foundation Freephone
0800 664 262**

Produced by the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand,
P.O. Box 8021, Symonds Street, Auckland.
Phone 368 1520

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