

about

gambling



What is gambling?

You are gambling when:

- you risk something of value (for example, money)
- the outcome is uncertain (you don't know if you will win or lose).

Have you ever gambled?

Many young people believe that just because they don't go to casinos or racetracks, they are not gambling. Ask yourself, have you ever:

- bought a raffle or lottery ticket?
- bet money with friends on the result of a sporting event?
- bet money on a game of cards or played bingo for money?
- bet a gadget (for example, an iPod) on a dare?

WHAT DO PEOPLE GAMBLE?

Most people gamble money. Other possessions that are sometimes used for betting include cigarettes, iPods, jewellery, CDs or brand-name sneakers.



If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you have gambled.

DID YOU KNOW?

In Deadwood, South Dakota, Wild Bill Hickok was shot while playing poker. Wild Bill's cards, a pair of eights and a pair of aces, have become known as the Dead Man's Hand.



Who gambles?

Most Canadian adults gamble—and do so without experiencing problems. Many young people gamble as well.

In a 2006 survey of Ontario students aged 15 to 17 years:

- One in three (35%) reported gambling at least once in the past year.
- The most common gambling activities were betting on a dare, playing cards for money, buying lottery or raffle tickets, and betting money on sports.
- Youth spent more time and money on Internet gambling than on any other form of gambling.

A 2009 survey of Ontario students in grades 7 to 12 found that:

- Male students are more likely than females to engage in most gambling activities.
- 2% (about 24,000 students—enough to fill more than 480 school buses) may have a gambling problem.



true or false

1. You've lost several times in a row at bingo, so you are getting closer to a win.
2. Over the past year, every lottery draw has included two numbers between 31 and 39. This means that the lottery organization favours these numbers.
3. A coin is flipped 10 times, and the results are nine heads and one tail. When the coin is flipped 10 more times, there will be more tails than heads because there were so many heads the first time.
4. In a lottery, all numbers have the same chance of winning.
5. A random-looking number (for example, 12-5-23-7-19-34) is more likely to win than a number that has a pattern in it (for example, 1-2-3-4-5-6).

1. FALSE. No matter how often you play, the odds of winning are always the same.
2. FALSE. Each number drawn is a random event—it is independent of the other numbers. Results from one draw are not connected to results from another draw.
3. FALSE. Every coin flip is a completely separate event. The most likely result in the next 10 flips is five heads and five tails, because each time the chance of either heads or tails is 50 per cent. But any combination of heads and tails is possible.
4. TRUE. Lottery organizations carefully balance and test their numbers to make sure that the balls are identical. All combinations have the same chance of coming up.
5. FALSE. All number combinations have the same chance of winning.

Answers:

Is gambling addictive?

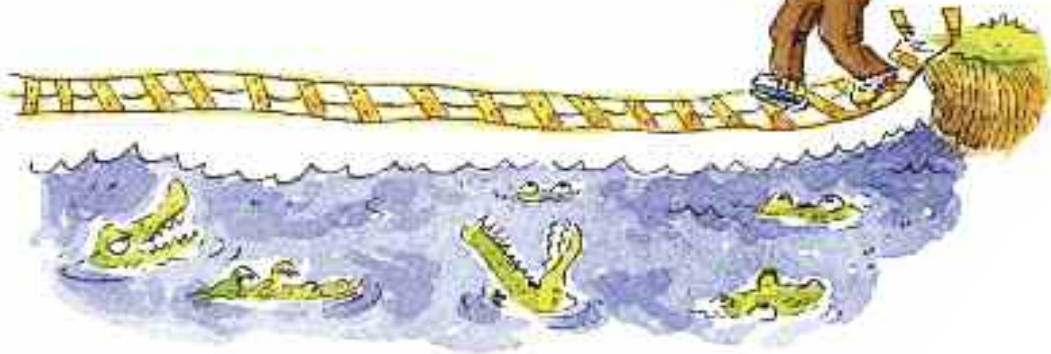
Some people do become addicted to gambling. You can become addicted to any activity that feels good or allows you to forget your problems for a while. This includes drinking alcohol, using other drugs and shopping, as well as gambling.

Who is at risk of developing a gambling problem?

You are more at risk of developing a gambling problem if:

- you start gambling at an early age
- you have a big win early in your gambling history
- you have money problems
- you have had a recent personal loss or change, such as relationship problems or the death of a loved one
- you gamble to cope with physical pain, emotional pain or stress
- you often feel lonely, bored, depressed or anxious
- you feel your life lacks direction
- you have been abused or traumatized
- you or someone in your family have (or had) problems with alcohol or other drugs, gambling or overspending
- you think you have a way of gambling that increases your chances of winning
- you feel you have to win back what you have lost
- you often take risks or act without thinking.

The more items in this list that are true for you, the more care you need to take if you gamble.

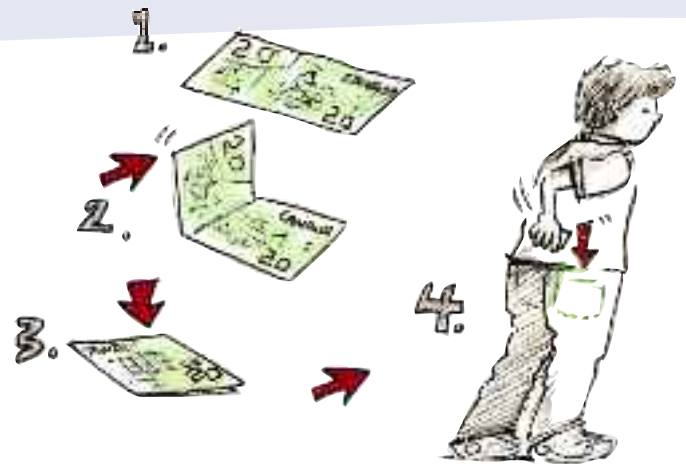


DID YOU KNOW?

Around the year 1000 A.D., the kings of Norway and Sweden settled a dispute over ownership of the island of Hising by rolling a pair of dice. Norway won the bet and the two kings reportedly parted on good terms.

FAST FACTS

Doubling your bet after a loss is one of the fastest ways to guarantee that you will lose all your money. The only sure way to "double" your money is to take a \$20 bill, fold it over and put it back in your pocket.



DID YOU KNOW?

Ancient German tribesmen who gambled away all their money would sometimes bet their personal freedom, so that the winner could sell the loser as a slave.

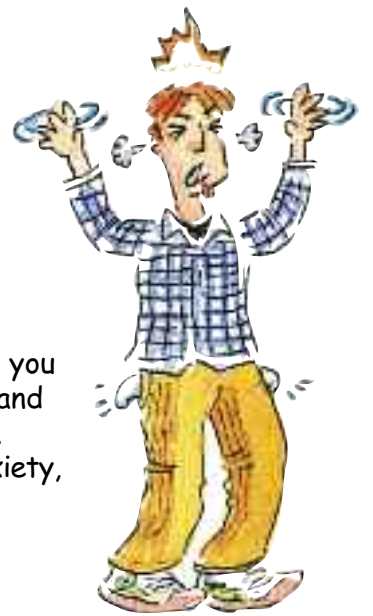
FAST FACTS

People who gamble to escape depression, anxiety or stress often end up making their lives much worse by losing more than they can afford to.



How does gambling make you feel?

Thinking about winning can be very exciting, and an actual win can make you feel important, successful, skilled—and very happy. However, when you lose, these feelings can be replaced by anxiety, sadness, desperation, frustration and anger.



FAST FACTS

"Chasing" is when you try to win back your gambling losses. It may involve not only chasing the money that you lost, but also chasing the feeling of how great it was to win.



Is gambling harmful?

Gambling can be harmful. Gambling is a problem when it:

- leads you to commit crimes, such as stealing to pay off your debts
- harms your mental or physical health
- hurts your wallet
- causes problems with your family or friends
- gets in the way of work, school or other activities (for example, when it results in lower grades, more time off school or work, or job loss).

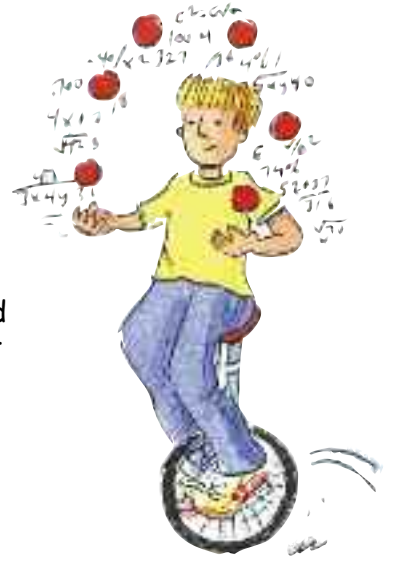


FAST FACTS

The only certainty in gambling is that the more you play, the more likely you will lose.

Can I make a living as a professional gambler?

Only those few people with great mathematical and psychological skills have a better chance than most of winning at poker and other card games. Just as most talented young hockey players never make it to the National Hockey League, very few good card players can make a living as a gambler.



What are your chances of winning?

You are likely to lose in the short term and over time because:

- It is impossible to predict or control something that is **random**. You cannot control slot machines, lottery balls or the throw of dice.
- **Each result is independent**. What happened before has no impact on the results of current or future play. Gambling games have no memory: lottery balls do not know what numbers were drawn in the past, and dice do not know what the previous roll was.
- Even in games that involve some skill (for example, poker, sports betting) the **"house" (the game operator) has the advantage**, because games are set up to guarantee a profit for the house.

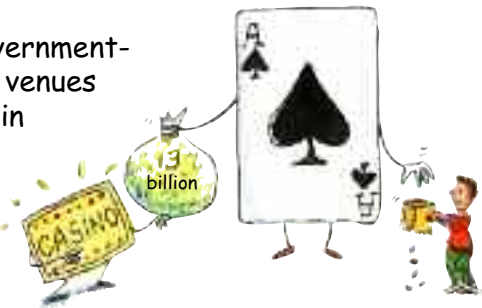


What about the gambling industry?

The gambling industry is like most other businesses. It provides a service (places to gamble) and hopes to make as much money as it possibly can.

Gambling is one of the largest entertainment industries in Canada. It brings in more money than television and movie rentals and more than the combined revenues from magazine and book sales, drinking places, spectator sports, movie theatres and performing arts.

In 2005-2006, government-operated gambling venues in Canada brought in over \$13 billion.



WHAT ARE YOUR ODDS?

Your odds of winning a Lotto 6/49 jackpot are about 1 in 14 million.

Consider this analogy: Suppose you need to phone someone. You know the person lives in a large Canadian city, but you don't know the person's name, phone number or which city the person lives in. Now imagine a stack of 14 phone books from Canada's largest cities. Cover your eyes, randomly choose one of the books, flip the pages, place your finger on the open page, and dial the number closest to your finger.

Your chance of finding the person on your first try is 1 in 14 million—the same as your chance of winning a Lotto 6/49 jackpot.

Is gambling legal?



Having friends over for a poker game is legal, but would be illegal if you kept a "cut" (a share of the takings).

Organizing a sports pool with 10 or fewer people is legal, but taking a cut from each bet to ensure a profit is illegal.

Private bets between individuals are legal (for example, a bet between two friends on the result of a hockey game), but the same bet with a bookmaker would be illegal.



FAST FACTS

In Ontario, you must be at least 18 years old to buy a lottery ticket or Proline ticket. An underage person cannot claim a prize.

FAST FACTS

You must be at least 19 years old to enter a casino.



DID YOU KNOW?

Cheating at a gambling game is a criminal offence.



How can I reduce my risks?

ALL TYPES OF GAMBLING HAVE RISKS. IF YOU CHOOSE TO GAMBLE, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING WAYS TO LIMIT THE RISK:



SET A LIMIT ON YOUR TIME AND MONEY: SPEND ONLY WHAT YOU CAN AFFORD TO LOSE. WHEN YOUR BUDGET IS GONE OR YOUR TIME IS UP, WALK AWAY! DO NOT TRY TO WIN BACK YOUR LOSSES.



UNDERSTAND THE ODDS: THE HOUSE ALWAYS HAS THE EDGE—ODDS ARE THAT YOU WILL LOSE.

KEEP A DIARY OF HOW MUCH YOU PLAY, AND RECORD YOUR WINS AND LOSSES: WE OFTEN ONLY REMEMBER OUR WINS! A DIARY CAN HELP YOU KEEP TRACK OF YOUR LOSSES SO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE SPENDING TOO MUCH.



RECOGNIZE YOUR RISK FACTORS: AVOID GAMBLING WHEN YOU FEEL SAD, BORED, LONELY, ANXIOUS OR ANGRY, BECAUSE YOU MAY BE MORE LIKELY TO GET CARRIED AWAY AND OVERSPEND. MIXING ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS WITH GAMBLING CAN ALSO LEAD TO OVERSPENDING ON GAMBLING.



For more information on addiction and mental health issues, or a copy of this resource, please contact the CAMH McLaughlin Information Centre:

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Toronto: **416 595-6111**

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LISTEN TO THE CONCERNS OF OTHERS: IF OTHER PEOPLE EXPRESS CONCERN ABOUT YOUR GAMBLING, LISTEN TO THEM! THEY MAY BE SEEING SOMETHING YOU ARE IGNORING.



VIEW GAMBLING AS ENTERTAINMENT AND NOT AS A WAY TO MAKE MONEY: PLAY KNOWING THAT YOU WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY LOSE.



HAVE A BALANCED LIFESTYLE: HAVE OTHER FUN AND MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES IN YOUR LIFE—NOT JUST GAMBLING.

How can I get help?

Do you, a family member or a friend have a problem with gambling? If you want help, you can talk to someone you trust, such as your doctor, a teacher, a health nurse, or a guidance or addiction counsellor. You might also want to contact a problem gambling centre or a self-help group (look in the Yellow Pages of your phone book under "Gambling"). Here are other places that can help:

- CAMH's Problem Gambling Service at **1 888 647-4414**
- CAMH's Adolescent Clinical and Educational Services (ACES) at **416 535-8501 ext. 1730**
- CAMH's problem gambling website at www.problemgambling.ca
- Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline at **1 888 230-3505**
- Kids Help Phone at **1 800 668-6868**.

