

What's the big deal? teens and problem gambling



Most young people don't consider themselves "gamblers." Yet most of today's teens have been gambling for years; not the way adults gamble – at bingo halls, bars or racetracks – but through casual betting with friends or family.

What is gambling?

Gambling is "the act of risking money or something else of value on an activity with an uncertain outcome."

Playing cards or video games for money, buying raffle tickets, betting on who's going to win the next game of pool, or wagering your favorite CD on the outcome of a sports event – it's all gambling.

For most, it's just for fun. It's a way of making the game more challenging, more exciting. But for some, gambling becomes a serious problem.

What is problem gambling?

Problem gambling is any gambling behavior that has a bad effect on your life or the lives of people close to you – parents, brothers and sisters, your friends.

If your gambling is causing you to fall behind on your schoolwork, have arguments with family or friends, or worry about money you have lost, it is considered to be "problem" gambling.

What are the signs of problem gambling?

People don't usually start out as problem gamblers. Somewhere along the way, though, the casual bets stop being "just for fun" and begin causing problems.

How would you know if your betting was becoming a problem?

It may be a problem if you:

- ✂ Spend more time or money gambling than you intend;
- ✂ Go back another day to try to win back your losses;
- ✂ Feel bad about the way you gamble or about what happens when you gamble;
- ✂ Tell others you've been winning money from betting when you really haven't;
- ✂ Want to stop betting money, or gambling, but don't think you can;
- ✂ Hide signs of betting or gambling from your parents, friends or others;
- ✂ Are being criticized for your gambling or told you have a gambling problem;
- ✂ Argue about money and gambling;

- ⌘ Skip school or work to gamble;
- ⌘ Borrow gambling money from someone and don't pay them back.

Who is at risk for gambling problems?

Anyone who gambles can develop a gambling problem. If you begin at a young age and if gambling is a frequent activity in your home or among your friends, you are at greater risk for developing a problem. You may not experience any problems at first, but problems may develop later on.

Often, people with gambling problems have troubles in other areas of their lives that they need to sort out, such as feeling lonely or arguing a lot with parents.

Where can you go for help?

If you are worried that you or someone you know may have problems related to gambling, call the Oregon Gambling Helpline at **877-MYLIMIT** or go to **1877mylimit.org** or contact your counseling office. You will be able to talk to someone who can answer your questions and help you decide if you need further counseling.

***Free teen brochure download:
1877mylimit.org – click on Resources***

Free parent brochure download: 1877mylimit.org – click on Resources

Modified from information from the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission.