

What older adults, their families and friends need to know about...

Gambling

Gambling can be fun and even exciting for older adults. It can offer a way to get out and socialize and to support a charity. Forms of gambling include casino games, bingo, scratch and win tickets, lotteries, betting on sports events, playing the stock market and gambling on the Internet. For most older adults, gambling is not a problem, but for some, it can be.

What is a gambling problem?

The sad truth about gambling is that most people who gamble lose more than they win. Older adults are usually retired and have limited finances; when they lose, it's hard for them to earn back that money. But problem gambling is not just about losing money. Gambling can affect a person's whole life.

Gambling is a problem when it:

- gets in the way of other activities
- harms a person's mental or physical health
- hurts a person financially
- causes problems for a person's family or friends.

What are the signs of a gambling problem?

Signs of problem gambling include:

- spending more on gambling than intended
- feeling bad, sad or guilty about gambling
- placing larger, more frequent bets
- not having enough money for food, rent or bills after gambling
- loss of interest and participation in normal activities with friends and family
- placing a high priority on gambling

- being secretive about the amount of time and money spent gambling.

What can I do to gamble safely?

You can avoid the risks associated with gambling when you:

- set financial limits and time limits
- play with money you can afford to lose
- leave extra cash, bank and credit cards at home
- don't borrow money to gamble
- think of gambling as a form of entertainment, not as a way to make money
- participate in other recreational activities
- keep a clear head, only gamble when you're sober
- gamble with others who gamble safely
- take regular breaks when gambling.

Where can I get help or find more information?

Contact the **Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline** at **1 888 230-3505**, or online at **www.opgh.on.ca**, for information and referrals to problem gambling counselling services, telephone-counselling services and



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mutual aid organizations such as Gamblers Anonymous and Gam-Anon. This free, confidential and anonymous service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Specialized services for older adults are available in some communities.

People who are actively involved in counselling report that it has helped them identify

their gambling triggers, restore balance and made them feel better equipped to deal with life.

For more information on addiction and mental health issues, please contact CAMH's R. Samuel McLaughlin Information Centre:

Ontario toll-free: 1 800 463-6273

Toronto: 416 595-6111

Or go to www.camh.net.