

High School Gambling Fact Sheet



FACTS

www.youthgambling.com

Because gambling is quite popular in our society, many teenagers try out different gambling activities, including poker, dice, scratch cards and sports betting, among others.

Few adults and adolescents are aware of the risks associated with excessive gambling, which is expressed by a gradual loss of control over gambling behavior.

- Approximately 4-5% of youth, ages 12-17, meet one or more criteria of having a gambling problem. Another 10-14% are at risk of developing an addiction, which means that they already show signs of losing control over their gambling behavior.
- While the vast majority of players will gamble only on occasion and just for fun, others will gamble excessively and develop serious problems. Those players become preoccupied with gambling activities, become over-involved, neglecting their responsibilities and other activities, which can lead to various other problems.
- In general, between 60-80% of high school students report having gambled for money during the past year; 4-6% of these students are considered pathological gamblers (addicted to gambling) while another 6-8% are at risk of developing a serious gambling problem, or show signs of loss of control. Boys are more likely than girls to gamble and experience gambling problems. Yet for most parents and teens, gambling is seen as an innocuous behavior with few negative consequences.

The difference between social gambling and pathological gambling

<http://www.teenhelp.com/teen-issues/teen-gambling.html>

Characteristics of Social Gambling (not problem gambling):

- Play with a set amount of money, and when it's gone, they are done. No IOUs to friends.
- Just want to have fun, doesn't get worried about the money.
- Avoids high-stakes games with large pots.
- May play regularly, but limits playing to once or twice a week, and does so only with friends.

Pathological teen gambling is a little more sinister. 4- 7% of teens display gambling problems – highschoolers have twice the rate of gambling problems as adults. At present, teen gambling addictions are more common among males, although females are becoming more involved in teenage gambling. Some signs of a pathological teen gambler include:

- **Likes the rush felt when gambling.**
- **Takes money, but then makes desperate attempts to stay in the game by writing IOUs.**
- **Will try almost anything to stay in the game.**
- **Really wants to win "the big one," but will keep playing even when losing a great deal.**

- **Plays online and has no qualms about using a credit card to gamble.**

Signs of a teen gambling addiction

There are a few signs that a teenager may be involved in a gambling addiction. Here are some of the red flags:

- **Begins to sell personal belongings.**
- **Borrows money from friends and family and does not repay it.**
- **Steals and lies.**
- **Has large amounts of cash that cannot be explained.**
- **Has a great deal of debt that cannot be explained.**
- **Strangers call on the phone with increasing frequency.**
- **Withdraws from his or her regular social groups and activities.**
- **Makes "900" number calls to gambling numbers.**
- **Appears distracted and anxious; can be moody or depressed.**
- **Unexplained absences from school or work.**
- **Breaks curfew regularly.**
- **Spends hours on online gaming sites.**
- **Obsession with sports scores can indicate a sports gambling habit.**

Monitoring gambling teens

One of the best things parents can do to prevent a teenage gambling addiction is to be involved. Let your teen know that he or she is welcome to have friendly poker games at your home, and then step in if the pot becomes too big, or if the teenagers start writing each other IOUs. Explain that social [gambling](#) on occasion can be fun, but that there are consequences to becoming too addicted to gambling. Some **consequences for teen gambling addictions** include:

- Declining grades.
- Habitual money problems.
- Less time for friends and family.
- Temptation to engage in illegal behavior to get money to pay off gambling debts - leading to possible jail time.
- Associations with unsavory characters who could make life difficult if they are not paid.

Teen Gambling Main source material: "Teens + Gambling = Trouble," UConn Health Center in the News. UConn Office of Communications. [Online.]