

# What is Problem Gambling?

## Gambling is Addictive

Gambling is the act of taking part in an activity, usually a game, where you risk something of monetary value on the chance of winning something. Gambling stimulates similar reward centers in the brain that using drugs activate.<sup>1,2</sup> Like drug use, gambling is also addictive, and continuing to gamble despite suffering serious consequences is problem gambling. Prolonged problem gambling can result in disordered gambling, which can harm the gambler and loved ones.



**But since most gamblers lose at some point, how do you know if someone is engaged in problem gambling?**

## Warning Signs of Problem Gambling

Anyone who gambles is at risk of developing a gambling disorder. Problem gambling is gambling that continues despite adverse effects. Like other diseases, gambling addiction has symptoms that can be observed. While everyone's addiction may appear differently, here are common signs of problem gambling:<sup>3</sup>

- Borrowing for gambling
- Lying about time or money spent on gambling
- Hiding time spent gambling or bills and unpaid debts
- Restlessness or irritability when not gambling
- Spending a lot of time thinking about or planning to gamble
- Exaggerating wins or minimizing losses

Anyone who gambles can become addicted to problem gambling.<sup>2</sup> If you're concerned about you or someone you know, [get help at gamblinghelpohio.org](https://www.gamblinghelpohio.org) or call the Ohio Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-589-9966.

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## If You Gamble, Get Set Before You Bet

The surest way not to become addicted to gambling is to refrain from gambling. However, if you gamble, there are steps you can take to protect yourself:

- Limit time/money spent on gambling
- Balance recreational gambling with healthy activities
- Gamble only with money budgeted for entertainment
- Never borrow money to gamble
- Know the risks before you bet, and know that everyone loses over time
- Play for fun, not for money.
- [Get more tips at beforeyoubet.org](https://www.beforeyoubet.org).



**GAMBLING PROBLEM?**  
**1-800-589-9966**

## About Us

Prevention Action Alliance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit in Columbus, Ohio that is dedicated to leading healthy communities in the prevention of substance misuse and the promotion of mental health wellness. Learn more about Prevention Action Alliance at [preventionactionalliance.org](https://www.preventionactionalliance.org).

Ohio for Responsible Gambling is an initiative aimed at promoting responsible gambling in Ohio. The Ohio Lottery Commission, the Ohio Casino Control Commission, the Ohio State Racing Commission, and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services comprise Ohio for Responsible Gambling, an initiative to promote responsible gambling.

The Problem Gambling Network of Ohio aims to build a network of support for those impacted by gambling through collaboration, education, and research. It is an affiliate of the National Council on Problem Gambling.

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ohio for responsible  
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1. "Compulsive Gambling." Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/compulsive-gambling/symptoms-causes/syc-20355178>.
2. "Help & Treatment." National Council on Problem Gambling. <https://www.ncpgambling.org/help-treatment/faq/>.
3. "Tips & Education." Get Set Before You Bet. <https://www.beforeyoubet.org/tips-education/>.