



Why it's Important to Talk to Your Teen About Gambling.



What does my teen need to know?

- **Gambling is not a way to make money.**
The activities provided by casinos, racetracks, bingo halls, Internet sites or lotteries are all designed so that most people lose in the long run.
- **The difference between high-risk and low-risk gambling.** Adults who gamble in a high-risk way lose the sense that it's only a game. They start to see gambling as a way to make money. Or they think they have special luck or abilities. Often when they lose, they bet more and more to try to win back what's been lost.

Adults who gamble in a low-risk way naturally follow the principles of safer gambling. They see gambling as a form of entertainment. For them, a small gambling loss is the cost of a night's entertainment—just like the cost of a movie ticket or a restaurant bill.
- **Problem gambling can lead to serious consequences.**
These include the loss of money, mounting debts, the destruction of a career and the loss of friends or family.

Did you know? On average, youth who gamble begin at the age of 13.*

“But my son is too young to gamble!”

Kids are exposed to gambling images every day: on TV, on the Internet or in-person at a convenience store. Even though your son or daughter is too young to gamble legally, it is very important to raise the issue. Why?

- Teens are only a few years away from being adults who can choose to gamble legally
- Many teens are already gambling—it may be a bet on a hockey game or a card game, but often it can be a lot more serious
- Once teens reach the age of 18, they are at the highest risk of developing a problem

Did you know? More than one-third of Ontario high school students between the ages of 15 to 17 have gambled in the past year?*

How do I protect them?

Teens who understand that gambling involves risks are less likely to develop a gambling problem. Parents who have never directly raised the topic with their teens may not realize it, but they are communicating a message about gambling through their own behaviour: parents may buy lottery tickets, play bingo or visit the casino. Or they may not gamble at all. Or, they may spend too much money gambling and regret it afterwards.

Talk directly to your teen about gambling and communicate exactly what you want to get across.

Did you know? Approximately 3.9% of teens who gamble experience gambling problems.*

A startling 63% of 18-24 year-olds in a recent survey believed that their chances of winning are 50/50 or better.



How do I start the conversation?

Here are some tips that can help start a conversation about the risks of gambling...

- **Look for a time to raise the topic naturally:** Don't force the issue. Talk to your teen after seeing a commercial about gambling or finding out a friend of the family has won or lost money gambling.
- **Ask questions first:** Learn about your teen's ideas and feelings about gambling before giving information or offering your own opinions.
- **Be patient:** It may take several discussions before your child understands the ideas that you want to convey.

If you are concerned about your gambling, or the gambling of someone you care about, call:

ONTARIO PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE
1-888-230-3505

Toll-free, confidential, anonymous, and open 24 hours.

For more information—including materials for your teen to read—or to find out more about local resources for help with gambling-related problems, please visit:

www.responsiblegambling.org

Responsible Gaming Resource Centre

The Responsible Gaming Resource Centre (RGRC), located on-site at OLG gaming venues across Ontario, provides patrons with information on safer gambling practices as well as assistance and local referrals for help with gambling-related problems. Operated by the Responsible Gambling Council, the centres are independent and all information provided to the RGRC is strictly confidential.

Responsible Gambling Council

The Responsible Gambling Council (RGC) is an independent, non-profit organization committed to problem gambling prevention. RGC designs and delivers highly effective awareness programs. Through the RGC Centre for the Advancement of Best Practices, the Council also promotes the identification and adoption of best practices in problem gambling prevention.

www.responsiblegambling.org

