

Youth Gambling Fact Sheet

“The rite of passage has gone from starting drinking to starting gambling” (Dr. Marvin Steinberg)

“This is the first generation of youth to be exposed to relatively easy access to a variety of gambling venues, widespread gambling advertising and to pervasive social approval for an inherently risky activity.” (Dr. Ken Winters).

What Is Gambling?

Any act that involves the risking of money or valuables on the outcome of a game, contest, or any other risk-taking event.

Motives For Adolescent Gambling

Relaxation - Enjoyment, excitement, entertainment – Adventure – Attention – Opportunity - Escape Negative feelings

Teens Commonly:

- **Live in the moment** and enjoy games that keep them attentive and engaged. The teen is accustomed to immediate communication via cell phone, Internet and mobile device
- **Are technologically literate** and can navigate the Internet at the speed of light compared to older generations
- **Are high risk takers** developmentally. This is a normal part of the teenage experience to challenge the norm and take risks, both physically and emotionally.
- **Have poor control** over impulsive behaviors.
- Are accustomed to **play games where physical presence, beauty, strength or acceptance is irrelevant.**

Major Types of Teen Betting

- Sports betting
- Lottery
- Cards (often poker)
- Games of skill

Signs Of Problem Gambling In Teens:

- Unexplained absences from school
- Dropping grades
- Increased family conflict
- The family suspects alcohol or other drug abuse

- Asking/taking/stealing money from family friends and strangers
- Large amounts of money in teen's possession
- Increased conversations about gambling and increased use of gambling terminology
- Showing off money, clothing, and other possessions
- Spending an unusual amount of time on the computer (out of parents sight), closing down programs when adults walk into the room, reading newspapers (sports page and stats), magazines, and/or periodicals having to do with sports or online poker sites.
- Selling personal belongings
- Bragging about winnings
- Lying, cheating, or stealing in school
- Exhaustion from lack of sleep
- Playing on a team but not performing to normal abilities (shaving points)
- Overly interested in how other teams at school are performing
- Overly invested in performance of certain athletes (fantasy football/basketball/etc.)

Teen rates for problem gambling are higher than for adults. Approximately 4 percent to 8 percent of kids between 12 and 17 years of age meet criteria for a gambling problem, and another 10 percent to 15 percent are at risk of developing a problem.

If you suspect a teen has a gambling problem, call
1-800-522-4700
for confidential help. Don't wait for the problem to go away,
it will only get worse!