



Teen Gambling: It's a **Bad Bet!**

Fact Sheet for Parents

Opportunities for gambling and social acceptance of gambling have increased dramatically in recent years. For most, gambling is not a problem. But for 6 to 9 million Americans each year, it becomes an issue that leads to serious financial and legal problems, loss of personal relationships, and damage to physical and mental health.

Teens are especially susceptible to becoming problem gamblers. Approximately 4%-8% of young people between the ages of 12 and 17 years of age meet the criteria for a gambling problem, and another 10%-15% are at risk of developing a problem. When a person starts gambling at a young age, the likelihood that they will become a problem or eventual pathological gambler increases.

Problem gambling can be difficult to spot and only those closest to teens might see the warning signs.



Signs of a Possible Gambling Problem in Youth

- ◆ Asking for or borrowing money from family members
- ◆ Gambling "stuff" in the home (lottery tickets, betting sheets, cards, dice, etc.)
- ◆ Unexplained debts or windfall of cash or new items of value (clothes, jewelry, etc.)
- ◆ Spending unexplained time away from home, school, or work
- ◆ Behavior changes (seems sad, distracted, nervous, worried, moody, etc.)
- ◆ Withdrawal from the family
- ◆ Less involvement in usual outside activities
- ◆ Unusual amount of time spent watching sports on television or reading about sports in newspapers, magazines, or on line
- ◆ Overly upset at result of a sporting match
- ◆ Telephone calls from strangers or higher phone bills
- ◆ Bragging about winnings
- ◆ Intense interest in gambling conversations
- ◆ Playing gambling type games on the internet
- ◆ Money or valuable items missing from the home

If you suspect a gambling problem call 1-877-8-HOPENY for confidential help. Early intervention is extremely important for the gambler and those closest to him. Don't wait for the problem to get worse!



Prevention
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1-877-8-HOPENY
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