

Teens and Gambling Fact Sheet

by Nancy M. Petry, Ph.D.

*Did you know that 68% of teens place a bet each year?*¹

Teens most often gamble on card games, pools/charity, lottery and scratch tickets, and sports.²

Over 10% of teens gamble twice a week or more often.¹

About 4% of boys aged 14-21 have a gambling problem.¹

Rates of gambling problems are higher in youth than adults.³

Signs of gambling problems include:⁴

- Spending more money and time than intended.
- Borrowing (or taking) money from others to gamble.
- Desperation to win back lost money.

Problems with gambling can extend to other areas:

- Feelings of guilt, stress, worry, or sadness.⁴
- Loss of friendships.⁴
- Low grades in school.⁵
- Alcohol and other drug use.⁵⁻⁷
- Legal difficulties.^{7,8}
- Suicidal ideation. Up to 25% of youth with gambling problems attempt suicide.⁷

What are risk factors for developing a problem with gambling?

- Gambling at a young age.⁹
- Gambling with parents.⁵
- Having relatives (parents, grandparents, uncles) with gambling problems.¹⁰
- Having relatives with drinking problems.¹¹
- Smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, or using other drugs as a teenager.⁵⁻⁷

What can you do if you know teens with gambling problems?

- Talk with them about it!
- Encourage them to call the gambling helpline (1-888-789-7777) or text (847-973-5684)
- Help them get into treatment (www.ct.gov/dmhas/pgs)

Treatment for gambling works.

- Over 75% of persons treated substantially reduce their gambling.¹²⁻¹⁴
- Other psychosocial problems decrease markedly with gambling treatment.^{12,14}
- Youth and college students respond well to brief gambling interventions.^{15,16}

Have the conversation!
Talk to teens about gambling.