

When gambling is unhealthy



A lottery ticket, bingo, or a few pulls of a slot machine—these are all types of gambling that can be fun and harmless. But sometimes, people don't just gamble for fun. It can become an addiction.

Problem gambling is when gambling becomes unhealthy to the gambler, their family or others. Over time, problem gambling can get worse and lead to health problems. The person may ignore their physical health, smoke, drink too much alcohol, or lose their job or relationships.

Problem gambling is not something the person can "just stop." Often, they need help from a doctor or a mental health professional. That's because for some people, gambling can stimulate areas in the brain that make it addictive, like nicotine in tobacco.



A person should not feel embarrassed if they have a problem with gambling. Doctors have different treatments for problem gambling that work. Getting medical care for problem gambling can save a person's physical, mental and financial health.

SIGNS OF PROBLEM GAMBLING:



- You think about gambling all the time.
- You gamble with money that is needed for other things.
- You don't tell others how much you are gambling.
- You feel uneasy if you try to quit gambling.
- Even if you lose money, you keep gambling to try to win it back.
- You feel the need to gamble with larger and larger amounts of money.
- You lose a job, relationship or opportunity because of gambling.
- You feel like you simply can't stop gambling, even if you try.

Source: National Institutes of Health