

A Sure Bet?

Use Your Head!

How to Control Your Gambling



A Sure Bet?

We all take risks. Gambling is a kind of risk taking. It's also fun and entertaining.

You can gamble on lots of things. Opportunities to bet are everywhere. You can even gamble on the internet. Fruit machines and scratchcards are quite cheap and quick to play, so playing them can easily become a habit. Each time you win you may find that you spend your winnings on more 'goes'. If you're not careful, though, you can get totally hooked.

Is gambling bad for me?

Gambling can be great fun. But if you let it get out of control, it can take over your life. It can get to the stage where you're not able to stop until you've run out of money, or think of anything else other than gambling. You 'borrow' money from friends and never pay them back, and get irritable and shaky when you can't gamble.

Have I got a Problem?

Be honest with yourself. Ask yourself these questions – do they describe you?

▶ Have I ever lied about my gambling, or lied to get money for gambling?

▶ Do I spend more money than I can afford on gambling?

▶ When I lose money, do I want to gamble some more to win back my losses?

▶ Do I gamble because I can't handle stress or worries in my life?

▶ Do I think about gambling when I should be concentrating on other things?

▶ Have I ever skipped school, college or work to gamble?

If you answer **'yes'** to any of these questions, you should be concerned about your gambling.

So what do I do?

Speak to someone you trust, like: a Friend, Teacher, Parent, Youth worker.

You can also phone the confidential GamCare Helpline **0845 6000 133**. At the other end of the phone will be someone who knows what you're going through, and isn't going to judge you. They can give you real help and advice.

Be Smart – Deal with it

A gambling problem isn't going to go away on its own! You need to do something about it. Telling someone about your problem is the first step, but there are other things you can do to help beat the addiction:

- ▶ Stop running away from the problem and blaming others. Decide to deal with it yourself.
- ▶ Think about what makes you want to gamble. Is it because you're bored, stressed out, or unhappy?
- ▶ Stop gambling while you're trying to break the habit.
- ▶ Write down each day how you're feeling and how you're coping.
- ▶ If you slip up, write down why you think it happened.
- ▶ Ask someone you trust to handle your money, at least until you've got your gambling under control. If you need money for other things, like food, clothes or fares, ask them for it and give them the change or receipts.

- ▶ Decide how you're going to start paying off debts.
- ▶ Cut up your debit or credit cash point cards.
- ▶ Treat yourself every now and then as a reward for not gambling. Spend some money on yourself!

You Can Beat the Habit!

But it will not happen overnight. In fact, it may take some time before you really start feeling better. And it will be hard work. But keep going! Your confidence will grow every day you don't gamble.

You'll have days when you really want to gamble. Or you'll feel moody or depressed. But don't panic! Talk to someone about your feelings (remember the GamCare helpline!) and find something to do that'll distract you.

If you slip up and gamble, don't be too hard on yourself. No one's pretending that breaking the habit will be easy. Think about why the slip occurred and try to learn from what happened.

Take it one day at a time.

Find a hobby, sports activity or outside interest that'll get your mind off gambling and that you'll really enjoy. Try to do things with people who don't gamble.

GAMCARE
National Association for Gambling Care
Educational Resources and Training

Helpline: 0845 6000 133

