

Gambling: Harmless Fun or a Problem With a Dangerous Addiction?

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There are so many different types of gambling available for people to get involved with today. Some are the traditional options, such as betting on races or sports games, or taking a trip to your local casino.

On the other hand, others are more modern concepts – such as online betting or playing games for cash online. Sometimes, these games of chance can be nothing more than a little harmless fun – a way to raise adrenaline and test your luck every once in a while.

Unfortunately, gambling is only harmless if you know how to control it, and as casinos and online locations exert more effort in marketing to gamblers with free games, chips, and hotel rooms all intended to lure them to the table, addiction becomes more of an issue. If you already exhibit addictive behavior, or struggle with issues of behavioral addiction such as those outlined at <http://americanaddictioncenters.org/behavioral-addictions/#stats>, then you could be all the more susceptible.

The Lure and Threat of Gambling

Whether you choose to engage in online fantasy football with friends or strangers, or prefer to make your gambling trips into more of an occasion with a casino, statistics suggest that about [8% of all gamblers](#) exhibit signs of addiction. Many of us are prepared to part with at least a little of our hard earned money in an effort to try our luck or soak up a little entertainment.

During these moments, we are thrilled if we win, but if we lose, we often take it in stride – so long as we have bet only what we can afford to lose.

Unfortunately, for some people gambling is a serious problem. No matter how fun it may appear to be on the surface. Usually, an addiction to gambling is something that starts in adolescence and grows over time. In some cases, however, it is possible for an individual to be hooked on the thrill from the very first time they place a wager. A lot of people typically find that they barely even notice that they have a problem at first, and convince themselves that they could stop if they wanted to.

Like an alcoholic or drug user, the gambler may visit his location of choice more frequently, and think about his next trip between visits. Other activities are planned around casinos and games, and other interests are neglected in favor of gambling opportunities. When these people do gamble, they generally take more risks and place larger bets.

Gambling Addiction

Often times, gambling addiction is regarded as a hidden problem, as the addict does not display the obvious symptoms or physical signs associated with other addictions like drug or alcohol abuse. What's more, loved ones may only begin to notice the consequences of a gambling addiction after the victim in question has spent huge amounts of money and incurred a significant amount of debt.

Typically, recognizing and dealing with a gambling problem as early as possible is the best way to mitigate the effects that the issue can have on the gambler, as well as the people who may rely upon him or her.

Just like any other addiction, gambling is a serious vice, and easy access to this vice has driven an exponential increase in levels of addiction throughout the country. States have allowed for riverboat casinos, expanded the lottery, and [fostered the gambling industry](#) within their borders in various ways. Unfortunately, there is no economic incentive to do anything about the gambling issue, because gambling addicts tend to drive profits for the states – certainly the state lottery!

It's Easy to become Addicted

For addicts, it can seem as though excuses to gamble and temptations lurk on every corner, making it easy to get involved with the problem, and not realize just how serious that issue might be until the compulsion ends up ruining a life.

In the media today, gambling is often portrayed as a bit of fun or harmless play, with more people than ever downloading bingo and slots apps on their smartphones or logging onto popular websites. Unfortunately, if you are one of the people who find themselves becoming addicted to gambling, then your betting, and the ease of access to different gambling sources today, could be your doorway into hell.