

LOOK FOR THESE IMPORTANT EARLY SIGNALS THAT YOU MAY BE GOING OVER YOUR LIMITS:

- Gamble to escape boredom or relieve feelings of loneliness, depression or anger
- Borrow money, sell things or use savings to gamble
- Skip family functions or neglect responsibilities to gamble
- Lie about how much time or money spent on gambling
- Gamble in order to win back losses or think that a “big win” is right around the corner
- Need to gamble with larger amounts of money, or for a longer time period, to get that same feeling of excitement
- Find it difficult to control or stop gambling, or feel irritable when you try to stop
- Have increased debt, unpaid bills, or other financial troubles
- Neglect to sleep or eat properly in order to keep gambling

For more information or to find local support services, **visit [ResponsibleGambling.org](https://www.ResponsibleGambling.org)**.



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR HELP IF YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR OWN OR A LOVED ONE'S GAMBLING:

ConnexOntario

A free and confidential 24/7 helpline for those concerned about their gambling, or that of a friend or family member. Support is offered in 170 languages.

Call 1.866.531.2600 or visit [connexontario.ca](https://www.connexontario.ca).

PAARC

Older Persons 55+ Problem Gambling Program

Visit [paarc.com](https://www.paarc.com) or call 905-629-1007 ext. 222

LESA Program

Older Adults 55+ Addictions Treatment

Visit [centretownchc.org](https://www.centretownchc.org) or call 613-233-5430

Responsible Gambling Council (RGC)

All in for Safer Gambling

RGC is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of problem gambling in Canada and around the world for over 35 years. We believe that gambling should never come at a human cost. By ensuring the right safeguards are in place, we influence positive change and advance responsible gambling standards.

www.ResponsibleGambling.org



A Quick Guide to Safer Gambling For Older Adults



Many people gamble – and with technology has come increased accessibility through apps, online sites, and social media platforms. Online or off, we buy lottery tickets, play casino games, bet on sports, or play poker or slots.

Most people who gamble can do so without developing a problem – but some can't. And while prevalence rates for problem gambling are typically lower for older adults than the general population, this stage of life presents an increased vulnerability if gambling problems develop. Understanding the potential risks and how to avoid them is the first step to making informed decisions about your play.

HIGH-RISK VS. LOW-RISK GAMBLING

Regardless of age, people who gamble in a high-risk way lose the sense that it's only a game. They start to view gambling as a way to make money or may think they have special luck or abilities. Often when they lose, they bet more and more to try to win back what's been lost.

Those who gamble in a low-risk way typically view gambling as just one form of entertainment and factor gambling into their household budget by setting and sticking to spending limits. For them, a small gambling loss is the cost of a night's entertainment – just like the cost of a movie ticket or restaurant bill. They don't think of gambling as a way to earn money nor do they try to win back money they've lost.



Retirement brings change and, like any life transition, it's easy to lose one's bearings and feel out of touch. Research shows that gambling at times like these can raise the risks of getting into trouble – and to an even greater degree for those who have gambled a lot in the past. Awareness of one's gambling behaviours during this period is key to avoiding potential negative impacts to finances and other important areas of life, like physical and mental health and relationships.

RISK AND VULNERABILITY FACTORS SPECIFIC TO OLDER ADULTS WHO GAMBLE:

Limited finances/fixed income > gambling losses make it very difficult to re-coup savings or retirement funds due to lack of work opportunity.

Unplanned for free time > financial planning for this phase is common but few plan for the increase in free time, leaving some to gamble just to relieve boredom.

Loss of social connections > retirement may result in loss of social networks and/or the loss of family or friends through death, both of which can result in over-gambling as a coping mechanism for loneliness or for the social opportunities it provides.

Decreased mobility/physical limitations > may prevent older adults from engaging in hobbies and activities once enjoyed, potentially leading to gambling over-involvement, given its sedentary nature.

Declining physical and mental health > chronic physical conditions (e.g. arthritis, heart disease) and cognitive changes can result in higher levels of anxiety and depression, which can contribute to further emotional upheaval (frustration, anger, etc.) and the need for relief from such through gambling.

If you choose to gamble, follow these low-risk strategies to minimize potential harms:

BEFORE YOU GAMBLE, PREPARE YOURSELF:

- Be self-aware – don't gamble when you're upset or stressed. Gambling is not recommended if you suffer from anxiety or depression
- Gambling is not a way to earn or replace income so don't think of it as a chance to win money for a trip, to pay bills or to pay off debt
- Decide on a time and budget before you begin. If gambling online, use the site's pre-commitment tools to set loss and win limits and stop when you reach those limits

WHILE PLAYING IN-VENUE OR ONLINE:

- Only gamble with money you have – never borrow money or use money intended for necessities, like rent or food
- Take frequent breaks – move around, get some fresh air, have a coffee or something to eat
- Don't try to win back what you've lost
- Limit or avoid alcohol and/or other substances while gambling
- Balance gambling with other recreational activities
- You can block sites you don't want access to or set time limits using software like Bet Blocker and GamBan

For other safer gambling tips, visit [ResponsibleGambling.org](https://www.ResponsibleGambling.org)

