



Concerned about your gambling?

Gambling
Helpline
NEW ZEALAND

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What's **this booklet** all about?

If you are worried about your gambling or interested in what problem gambling is and how it can be overcome this booklet has been written for you.

This booklet will:

- Give you information about when gambling becomes a problem
- Help you to think about what you want to do about your gambling
- Give you some practical ways to stop or reduce your gambling
- Let you know about services that can support you

Please call us at the **Gambling Helpline 0800 654 655** if you have any questions or are interested in more information after you read this.

If you're worried about someone else's gambling you can also call the Gambling Helpline and ask for a booklet similar to this that describes some ways to support someone with a gambling problem and to look after your wellbeing.

There's more information about us and how we can help on the last page of this booklet.

Worried about your gambling?

This booklet has been written for you.

Is there a **problem** and how can you tell?

What's gambling?

Gambling is happening when time and money are spent 'taking a risk' on an event with an uncertain outcome. Items of value, like money, cars, holidays, are given out according to the outcome of the event.

Outcomes include which horse or dog comes first, which symbols are displayed on a pokie machine after you press a button, or which numbers come up in a lottery.

The risk is that you don't know what the outcome will be before you use your or someone else's money to gamble. You might win, you might lose. But remember that gambling is designed for the organiser to make a profit – in the long run the person gambling loses.

Gambling is about taking risks.

The uncertainty of whether you might win or you might lose.

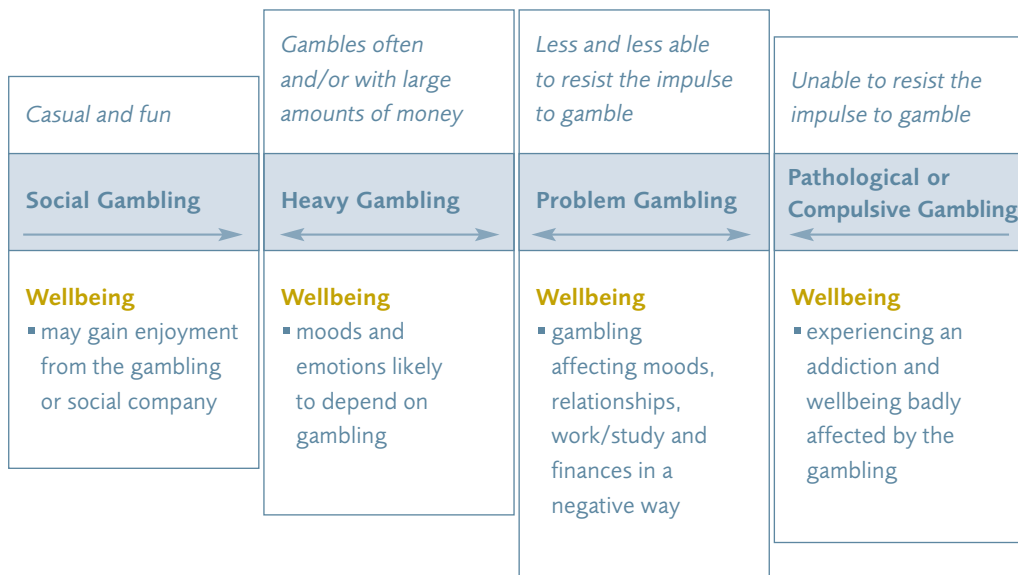
Types of gambling include:

- Pokie machines
- Casino table games like blackjack or roulette
- Horse and dog racing
- Internet casinos and betting
- Sports betting
- Card games
- Lotto or scratch tickets
- Bingo or housie
- Raffle tickets

New ways to gamble are being designed all the time.

When does it become a problem?

There are different levels of gambling from social through to compulsive gambling. These different levels can affect a person's wellbeing in different ways.



Gambling is not designed for you to be the winner - it's about the organiser making a profit.

Gambling has become a problem if it is badly affecting a person's wellbeing or the people around them.

Some people progress through each level over time; they start gambling socially, move on to gambling heavily and so on. Others may reach the level of problem or compulsion very quickly. For some, there can be brief improvements in their wellbeing and gambling levels.

At the problem or pathological end the gambling is likely to be affecting others around the person gambling including their partner, children, wider family and friends. It will be much harder to improve wellbeing but it can be done.

The gambling has become a problem if it affects a person's wellbeing in any way indicated on the previous page, but it is also a problem if it is affecting those around them.

Why has it become a problem in the first place?

There's no easy answer to this question. Every person is different and may have developed problems with gambling for different reasons. But there are some studies that indicate some of the shared reasons why people develop problems with gambling.

A person's environment can contribute to a gambling problem. A person's environment involves the physical places they live and work in and the people they are surrounded with.

- Working next door to a casino is an environmental factor that could contribute to the problem.

Is there a **problem** and how can you tell?

Learned behaviour can also have an impact.

- Having parents who regularly gamble, seeing gambling widely advertised as a normal everyday activity or having an early win can lead to learned behaviour that is sometimes not healthy.

The way someone thinks can also make them more likely to develop a gambling problem.

- Low self-esteem or thoughts that gambling will solve financial difficulties are ways of thinking that may contribute to the problem.

Gambling problems can become worse when a person starts to experience physical reactions similar to an addiction. This is where their brain starts to produce endorphins during a gambling session to sooth pain and to give a feeling of euphoria, or a "high". So like being addicted

to a drug or alcohol, people with gambling problems often report strong urges or feelings of "needing to gamble" which is partly related to the physical longing for the endorphins. Often the person who is experiencing this does not know why it is happening.

There are other non-personal reasons why problems develop including wide availability of forms of gambling in easily accessible local venues, the design of the gambling technology, and a general lack of public information about how to gamble in a safe way.



Taking the self-assessment will give you an idea of how you are managing your gambling.

Do I have a problem with gambling?

The self-assessment on page 9 is a good way to work out whether you might have a problem with gambling.

For each question there are four possible responses and each response has a score attached.

Response	Score
Never	0
Sometimes	1
Most of the time	2
Almost always	3

Record your scores in the boxes next to the questions and when you've finished add up your total.

You score:	Your score indicates that you are:
0	A non-gambler or non-problem gambler
1 – 2	A low-risk gambler
3 – 7	A moderate-risk gambler
8 & over	A potential problem gambler

Call us at the Gambling Helpline if you would like to talk about your score or about the questions.

Is there a **problem** and how can you tell?

Over the past 12 months:

How often have you gambled more than you could really afford to lose?

How often have you needed to gamble with larger amounts of money to get the same feeling of excitement?

Have you gone back on another day to try to win back money you have lost?

How often have you borrowed money or sold anything to gamble?

How often have you felt you might have a problem with gambling?

How often have people criticised your betting or told you that you had a gambling problem, whether or not you thought it was true?

How often have you felt guilty about the way you gamble or what happens when you gamble?

How often has your gambling caused you any health problems, including stress or anxiety?

How often has your gambling caused any financial problems for you or your household?

Your total score



People have different reasons to do something about their gambling.

What are yours...

What do I want to do about my gambling?

That may be clear to you already, or you could have some thoughts or questions you would like to work through. Other people who have decided to do something about their gambling and have successfully stopped or cut back on their gambling say it's important to be clear about your reasons for doing so. Some of the reasons that people have mentioned are:

Emotional / personal

- *"It doesn't feel good trying to hide my gambling or dealing with hassles over bills. I find myself hating myself for what I've done."*
- *"I knew I was depressed. I thought that my family must be sick of me."*

Financial

- *"I had to hide the bank statements. I learnt to intercept the mail and would feel scared that one of the creditors would ring while I wasn't home."*
- *"The debts kept piling up. It was hard to relax because all the time I'd be juggling money in my head and trying to put off creditors."*
- *"It got to the point where we were behind with our power bills and the rent. Our phone got cut off. I started to get scared."*
- *"It was fun at first – just a little bit of house-keeping money. Perhaps it was a way of escaping from my worries for a while. I kept going back to win money I'd already lost. Then it became all the house-keeping money."*

Relationships and effects on family

- *"I'm tired of lying to my partner about my whereabouts and getting stressed trying to remember what lies I've told. I'm sick of our arguing about money."*
- *"I felt guilty and ashamed about gambling the money we needed for food, nappies and other bills. I love my children, yet I was neglecting them."*
- *"We separated as a result of my gambling."*

Health

- *"The stress was taking a toll on my health. I was getting headaches and stomach aches. I was so busy worrying about money and planning to gamble that I didn't look after myself. Sometimes I wouldn't eat all day and then when I did it would be takeaways."*

"...I love my children yet I was neglecting them".

"My business went under..."

"...I was getting headaches and stomach aches..."





Effects on work or study

- *"After spending most of the night gambling I'd arrive at work exhausted. Sometimes I'd take a long lunchtime to go out and gamble. I'd sneak back to work and avoid my work colleagues."*
- *"I used up my sick leave to stay home and listen to the races."*
- *"My business went under when I used up all the cash reserves on gambling."*

Social life

- *"I thought it was good to be around other people while I was gambling, but I realised that when we were gambling we didn't actually talk about ourselves. I was pretending that I was being social. In actual fact I neglected the people that mattered most to me when I was gambling."*

Legal issues

- *"I never stole before my gambling got out of control. I felt desperate and started stealing from work."*
- *"When I went to my parents house I'd sometimes sneak into my Mum's purse and steal a little bit here and there. I thought she'd never notice."*

What do I want to do about my gambling?

I want to stop gambling because...

You may have tried to stop or cut down on your gambling in the past and found that it hasn't worked. Maybe last time you weren't quite ready. Maybe this time you are.

List your own reasons for wanting to stop or manage your gambling in order of importance.

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

**Putting your reasons
in writing can help
you keep focused on
your goal.**





Write some more reasons here for wanting to stop or manage your gambling:

If you have decided that you want to take some action, the rest of this booklet is for you.

Concerned about your gambling?

How can I stop or manage my gambling?

Deciding to take control of your gambling – or to be gamble-free – might feel a bit daunting. It's certainly a huge goal and one that you'll find more manageable by taking things one day at a time.

You might find the Gambling Helpline's carry-card helpful. It has an affirmation "Just for today, I will not gamble" that you may wish to use. You can get a carry-card by giving us a call.

If a whole day seems too long you can break it down into smaller pieces:

"Just for the next hour I won't gamble."

Then when the hour is up, say that was 8 to 9 am, you might make it a longer time

"Just from now until 11.00am I won't gamble."

The more you say your affirmation, write it down, and read it, the better.

Remember to give yourself credit for all the achievements you make even though you're taking small steps at a time. Each one is a step in the direction you want to be heading, so acknowledge the progress you're making.

The following pages include some practical ways to support you in your goal. If you need additional support or have any questions please call us at the Gambling Helpline.

Gambling Helpline's carry-card is available by calling 0800 654 655.



Taking small steps will help you achieve the whole goal.



What should I aim for first?

On page 17 you can start setting goals that you'd like to achieve as you work towards stopping, or cutting back on, your gambling. If you run out of space you might like to use an extra sheet of paper to make some more goals and attach it to this book.

Set realistic goals, no matter how small they might seem. Achieving smaller goals one-by-one is much more encouraging than struggling with bigger ones.

Be specific too. That way you'll know when you've achieved your goal and you can acknowledge your success. For example, "*I'm going to pay back the money I owe my parents,*" is less specific than "*I'm going to set up an automatic payment to my parents account, paying them \$20 each week until the debt is repaid.*"

Example:

My goal:

Just for today I will not gamble

Things that could get in the way of me achieving my goal:

Going near a pub that has pokie machines;
going past the casino or near the TAB;
feeling bored;
following the races on the radio, TV, or in the newspaper.

What I need to do so that I'm not stopped by these things:

Go home from work the long way so I don't go past the casino or TAB;
take a tape to listen to in the car so I don't listen to the races on the radio;
spend the evening catching up with friends and family by phone so I don't watch sports on TV;
go for a walk after dinner;
cancel the newspaper.

How can I **stop or manage** my gambling?

Your turn:

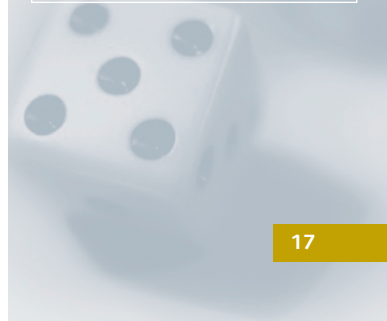
My goal: _____

Things that could get in the way of me achieving my goal: _____

What I need to do so that I'm not stopped by these things: _____

Setting written goals is a positive step forward.

It also gives you something to look back on to see how far you have come.



Recognise the triggers that give you the urge to gamble.

How to counter the urge to gamble

When you're managing to stay gamble-free, or to successfully limit your gambling, there are some things that can trigger that urge to gamble again. Here are some of the things to watch out for that could lead to gambling again.

Situations

- Going back to places where you used to gamble like pubs, clubs, casinos, or the TAB
- Watching or listening to the races
- Talking about gambling
- Reading racing pages or racing magazines
- Receiving bills in the mail

Relationships

- When you're under stress at home
- When there's conflict in your relationships
- When there are communication problems
- When you receive invitations to gamble from friends

Concerned about your gambling?

Feelings

- When you're feeling depressed, lonely, bored, or even over-confident

Self-talk

- When you make excuses to go back to the gambling situation
- When you find reasons to continue gambling
- When you deny – or forget – how bad the problem has been
- When you say things to yourself like "*now that I've started, I've blown it anyway so I may as well keep going*"

Behaviour

- When you cut yourself off from other people
- When you stop your new behaviours like exercise, eating healthily, budgeting, GA meetings, counselling, and communicating

How can I **stop or manage** my gambling?

It is important that you plan some ways to deal with the urges.

Examples:

Trigger	Safeguards
Reading racing pages in paper	Avoiding the sport section altogether by asking a family member to destroy it or cancel the newspaper
Driving past the pub on the way home from work	Taking a different route home
Arguments with partner	Go for a run or walk to cool off or listen to some music or call the Gambling Helpline



Are there any triggers that could be a problem for you?

Write them down in the space below. Alongside each one, make note of something you could do – or someone you could talk to – to stop the urge to gamble.

Your notes:

Trigger	Safeguards

How can I stop or manage my gambling?

Gambling debt

You may have financial problems as a result of your gambling.

These could include:

- Overdue bills
- Frequently using your credit card/s for the purpose of gambling
- Unpaid rent/mortgage payments
- Unpaid loans from banks and other creditors
- Impending eviction or repossession
- Money owed to family and friends
- No money for everyday necessities like food

The Gambling Helpline has a specialist service, the **Gambling Debt Helpline 0800 654 658**, staffed by financial counsellors who work with people who have gambling-related financial concerns or debt.

They can:

- Help you work out a short term budget and debt management plan
- Suggest safe ways that you can communicate with creditors
- Give you an idea of what to expect in dealings with debt collectors, banks, or creditors
- Talk you through some financial options
- Refer you to face-to-face financial or legal assistance
- Address your gambling as well as your financial problems

This service is free regardless of your financial background. This service is not available every day. If you call outside of the specialist service hours you can either leave a message or call the main Gambling Helpline to arrange for a financial counsellor to call you back.

The Gambling Debt Helpline 0800 654 658, is a specialist service that is there to help.

The more warning signs you identify with, the more important it is to ask for help.

Am I looking after myself?

People with a gambling problem often forget to look after their own health and wellbeing.

Have a look at these warning signs about general wellbeing and tick those that you identify with.

The more you identify with these the more important it is you speak to someone. You might need to talk to your doctor or a counsellor about your physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.

You might want to talk to someone at the **Gambling Helpline 0800 654 655** as a first step, or one of our other services like the **Maori Gambling Helpline 0800 654 656** or **Pasifika Gambling Helpline 0800 654 657**.

- Stressed / tense / worried?
- Tearful?
- Lacking motivation?
- More tired than usual?
- Drinking more alcohol or smoking more?
- Experiencing sleep problems?
- Suffering stomach upsets?
- Getting headaches?
- Using recreational drugs?
- Developing unhealthy eating habits?
- Finding it hard to concentrate?
- Isolating yourself from family or friends?

Concerned about your gambling?

How can I stop or manage my gambling?

What about others?

If you have a gambling problem that is affecting your wellbeing, it is also possible that it is affecting the wellbeing of others around you.

Others who could be affected are:

- Your partner, husband or wife
- Your children
- Other relatives
- Your employer or employees
- Your work mates/colleagues
- Your friends

Other people may be concerned for you and they may not know how, or feel confident enough, to talk to you about your gambling. You might also be finding it difficult to talk about your gambling with them or you might be concerned about them.

Remember that someone you care about might want to support you in your goal to stop or reduce your gambling.

If you need support in approaching someone you care about to talk about your gambling and about what it means for both of you, you could call us at the Gambling Helpline to work through ways to do this.

Children and teenagers who are affected by someone else's gambling can also call the **Youth Gambling Helpline 0800 654 659** to speak with a youth counsellor.

Remember we have a booklet, like this, that is there to provide support for people concerned about someone else's gambling.

Gambling doesn't just affect you, people around you may also be affected.



How can I stop or manage my gambling?

Support from family and friends

It is not unusual to feel very alone and overwhelmed, especially when you keep the gambling problem to yourself. Many people have found that sharing the burden with others was critical in coping successfully. Other people can help you maintain your motivation to deal with this difficult problem and may also have useful ideas that you have overlooked.

This section helps you to identify what kind of support you need and how to ask for help.

Who have you already spoken with about the gambling problem?

Make a list of people who you would feel comfortable asking for support. Ideally, these people will be good listeners, non-judgemental, and will support you no matter what.

**You don't
have to face
this alone.**



How will you ask for support?

What can each person start doing?

(e.g., phone you regularly to ask how things are, provide encouragement and positive comments, accompany you to leisure or recreational activities)

Person

Support

Person	Support
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

Concerned about your gambling?

How can I **stop or manage** my gambling?

Checklist

- Use the Gambling Helpline as often as you want: 0800 654 655.
- Contact a local face-to-face gambling counselling service or Gamblers Anonymous group.
- Talk to the Gambling Debt Helpline about strategies to address your gambling debt.
- Have a check-up with your doctor. The better you're feeling, the more energy you'll have to take control of your life.
- Plan your day so you know what's going to fill your time. Think about some healthy alternatives to gambling and include time to do something special for yourself as well as for your family or friends.
- List 10-20 safe and achievable things you can do if you get any urges to gamble.
- Take one day (or even one hour!) at a time.
- Consider how you can involve the people you care about in your plans to stop or reduce your gambling.
- Be honest with yourself.
- Now that you've taken the first step, use positive words like "*I can...*" and "*I'm going to...*"
- Give yourself a pat on the back every time you make progress.

Remember by asking for help you've taken one of the hardest steps already.

It's important you have people you can talk to about what's going on and how you're feeling.

Who can support me?

People who get support are more successful in overcoming their gambling problems than those who try to go it alone.

The **Gambling Helpline** provides support for any person affected by problem gambling. You'll find more details about us on the last page.

Counselling can make a big difference to those wanting to make changes in their lives. You'll find more details about this on the next page.

There may also be a **Gamblers Anonymous** group in your area. The Gambling Helpline can tell you where they meet and who to contact.

Supportive **family members and friends** who you can talk to and spend time with can make things a lot easier too. Other support options include seeing your **doctor** or the **Talking Point** forum on the Gambling Helpline's website (www.gamblingproblem.co.nz) where people experiencing similar problems post their stories and provide each other with support.

There are also **books** written by others who have experienced similar difficulties. The Gambling Helpline can give you some references for these.

Other organisations that might be able to provide you with support include Citizens Advice Bureaux, church groups, school counsellors and local community groups. Your local telephone directory will have a list of agencies in your area that could help.

Here you can list your support people and organisations with their contact details.

Gambling Helpline **0800 654 655**

Concerned about your gambling?

What is counselling?

A face-to-face counselling session gives you an impartial person to talk with about things that concern you.

Working with a counsellor isn't about being told what to do – it's a way to find strategies and solutions that are right for you.

The first time you go, the main goal is to find out how you and the counsellor can best work together. The counsellor will ask you to give some background information on why you are there and might ask questions to clarify, or understand, what you are saying.

You might also be asked to fill in some questionnaires to help the counsellor understand how things are going with you.

Based on your needs and the information you provide, you and the counsellor will develop a plan for how best to work together.

You can go on your own or take a support person.

How often a person goes to counselling and how long it takes to work through an agreed plan varies from person to person. The aim is that you can stop when you feel more confident about handling the concerns that you brought to counselling.

There are face-to-face agencies throughout New Zealand. The Helpline can help you make an appointment or give you contact details for your area.

The Helpline and counselling agencies are free services.

Counselling can often help get to the underlying issues connected with your gambling.

**Trained counsellors
who understand
gambling and gambling
problems answer the
phones.**

The Gambling Helpline

The Gambling Helpline is a nationwide free distance counselling support service. We provide support by phone, email, text or through our websites.

We provide ongoing support for anyone affected by gambling. That means we're here for the person who is gambling and for anyone affected by them including partners, family and friends.

We also provide general information for people wanting to know more about gambling problems and produce self-help resources like this. At your request we can arrange referrals to face-to-face counselling agencies throughout New Zealand.

We're open everyday of the year. You can phone anytime and if you're unable to get through, please leave a message and we'll discreetly return your call.

Concerned about your gambling?

Gambling Helpline 0800 654 655

We have several specialist services within the Gambling Helpline.

Maori Gambling Helpline 0800 654 656

**Pasifika Gambling Helpline *Vai Lelei*
0800 654 657**

**Youth Gambling Helpline *In Ya Face*
0800 654 659**

Gambling Debt Helpline 0800 654 658

The specialist services are not open everyday, but you can leave a message and ask to be called back, or call the main helpline if you need immediate help.

Who can support me?

We have two web sites that provide information about who we are and about gambling in New Zealand as well as some gambling problem assessment guides and resources:

Main website
www.gamblingproblem.co.nz

Youth website
www.inyaface.co.nz

The main website includes a talking point forum – similar to a chat room – where people share their stories about gambling problems.

You can also **text us on 8006**.

We've prepared this booklet to help you to help yourself. If you have any comments or suggestions about how this booklet can be improved or if you would just like some extra support over the phone, please call us.

Gambling
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NEW ZEALAND

We're here to help you.



Gambling Helpline

PO Box 74-592, Market Road, Auckland 1543, New Zealand.

Freephone 0800 654 655 www.gamblingproblem.co.nz

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