

Fact Sheet: Child and Youth Problematic Online Gambling

What Is Online Gambling?

Online gambling includes online games where players can make bets, win or lose money, or things of value. It also includes online games where players can bet virtual coins or tokens. Sometimes, gambling can be found within video games or online games, where players earn, lose, or bet with points, or to earn “loot boxes”. The line between gambling and games is sometimes blurry!

Examples of Online Gambling:

If you can earn, lose, or bet points, it might be considered gambling; here are some examples:

- sports betting or sports lotteries
- online casino games (e.g., poker, blackjack, etc.), including “free play or practice modes” where no money is involved
- video lottery terminals (VLT’s), which are legal for youth 18 years and older in Alberta
- loot boxes, special “skins”, and other items of value

How Common is Youth Online Gambling?

- 24% of grade 7 students are gambling, and 40% of grade 12 students are gambling
- gambling is more popular among males than females
- males are more likely to be at risk for problematic gambling

Why Is Gambling a Concern for Youth?

- Youth (12 to 24 years of age) are at a higher risk for problem gambling as they may be more impulsive, have more mood swings, and are seeking to be more independent.
- The earlier a person starts gambling, the likelier they are to have gambling problems later in life.

How Do I Know I Might Have a Problem with Online Gambling?

- I often spend more money than I planned.
- I often spend more time playing than I planned.
- I gamble or play online games instead of taking care of responsibilities.
- I cannot stop thinking about gambling or a specific game.
- I have difficulty cutting down or stopping gambling.

For More Information:

- AHS Youth Addiction Services at 1-866-332-2322 (toll free within Alberta).
- Find more information for parents and youth at MyHealthAlberta.ca: [Growing Up Online](#) and [Teens and Gambling](#)