



LifeSmarts

Learn it. Live it.

Key Points

ONLINE GAMBLING IS EASY TO ACCESS

Apps, websites, and even social media games can make gambling available 24/7, often with little age verification.

TEENS ARE AT HIGHER RISK FOR ADDICTION

The instant rewards, fast pace, and constant access of online gambling can make it more addictive, especially for young users. Early exposure increases the chances of long-term gambling problems.

LOSSES CAN ADD UP QUICKLY

Gambling online often feels like playing a game, but real money—and real consequences—are on the line.

Core Concepts

HOW ONLINE GAMBLING WORKS

From digital casinos to sports betting apps and “loot boxes” in video games, many platforms mimic gambling with real or virtual money.

SIGNS OF GAMBLING ADDICTION

Spending more than you planned, lying about gambling, chasing losses, and feeling anxious or restless without gambling are red flags for addiction.

THE ROLE OF ALGORITHMS AND ODDS

Online gambling sites are designed to keep players hooked. The odds are almost always in favor of the platform, not the player.

FINANCIAL AND PERSONAL IMPACTS

Teens can quickly rack up debt, lose savings, damage relationships, and face long-term money problems from gambling habits.

LEGAL AGE RESTRICTIONS AND RISKS

Many online gambling platforms have 18+ or 21+ age limits, but enforcement is weak. Using fake accounts can lead to account bans or even legal trouble.

HOW TO SEEK HELP

Counselors, hotlines, and support groups can help teens or families struggling with gambling problems or addiction.

StudySmart Guide - StudySmart Guide - StudySmart Guide - StudySmart Guide

Betting on Trouble

Additional Resources

National Library of Medicine - Gambling, Youth and the Internet: Should We Be Concerned?

Research about the significance of gambling
<https://bit.ly/3Jd7vD9>

Healthychildren.org - Teen Gambling

How online gambling can harm teens and what can be done about it
<https://bit.ly/4lnTdg4>

High Stakes for High Schoolers: Wanna bet teens need gambling education?

Winning article written by a teen for the NY Post
<https://bit.ly/4maDiD9>

YouTube - Teens Open Up About Gambling Addiction

Hear from a teen who is struggling with gambling addiction
<https://bit.ly/3HvBR31>

Listen to the Podcast



Explore and Explain

1. Why can online gambling be more addictive than gambling in person?
2. How can gambling at a young age increase the risk of long-term addiction?
3. What financial consequences can result from frequent online gambling?
4. How do some video games use features like loot boxes or in-game purchases that resemble gambling?

Understanding the risks of online gambling can help you make informed choices and avoid financial and personal harm.

Online Gambling



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Acronyms

APA

American Psychiatric Association

ESRB

Entertainment Software Rating Board

GA

Gamblers Anonymous

IGRA

Indian Gaming Regulatory Act

NCPG

National Council on Problem Gambling

Vocabulary

ADDICTIVE DESIGN

Features built into apps/games to keep users engaged & spending money

CHASING LOSSES

A dangerous behavior where a gambler keeps betting to try to win back money they've lost

COMPULSION LOOP

A psychological cycle of reward-seeking behavior, used heavily in gambling design

CONFIRMATION BIAS

The tendency to remember wins more than losses, reinforcing false beliefs about luck

DOPAMINE

A brain chemical linked to reward and pleasure, released during risky behavior like gambling

FALSE WINS

Small or break-even outcomes that feel like wins, keeping players engaged

GAMBLING DISORDER

A recognized mental health condition involving uncontrollable gambling behaviors

INSTANT GRATIFICATION

The appeal of immediate rewards used by gambling platforms to keep users hooked

TOLERANCE

Needing to gamble more over time to get the same high or thrill, similar to substance addiction