

Fact Sheet: Child & Youth Problematic Online Gambling

Youth & Digital Technology: Growing Up Online Toolkit

What Is Online Gambling?

Online gambling includes digital games where players can bet real money, or things of value. It also includes online games where players can bet virtual coins or tokens for wagering. 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 can sometimes be unclear.

Examples of Online Gambling:

If a game allows players to 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, slots etc.), including “free play or practice modes” where no money is involved
- Video lottery terminals (VLT’s), legal for youth 18+ years and older in Alberta
- Loot boxes, special “skins”, and in-game purchases with real-world value

How Common is Youth Online Gambling?

- 24% of grade 7 students are gambling, and 40% of grade 12 students report engaging in gambling activities
- Gambling is more popular among males than females
- Males are at a higher risk of developing gambling-related problems

Why Is Gambling a Concern for Youth?

- Youth (12 to 24 years of age) are at a higher risk for problem gambling due to impulsivity, mood swings, and a growing desire for independence
- The earlier a person starts gambling, the likelier they are to have gambling problems later in life
- Many online games use psychological tactics to keep players engaged, making it harder to recognize when gambling is becoming problematic

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 or intended
- I gamble or play online games instead of taking care of responsibilities
- I constantly think about gambling or specific games

For more information, contact

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<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page17564.aspx>

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- I have difficulty cutting down or stopping gambling

For More Information:

- Recovery Alberta Youth Addiction Services at 1-866-332-2322 (toll free within Alberta)
<https://recoveryalberta.ca/>
- Find more information for parents and youth at MyHealthAlberta.ca Teens and Gambling <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/growing-up-online/online-gambling>

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