

# Problem Gambling

## What is it?

Some people can gamble responsibly, but others find it hard to stop. Gambling becomes a problem when it starts to disrupt a person's personal, family and work life. Problem gambling can also affect those around them.

If your quality of life is suffering due to your or someone else's gambling, there is help.

## What will my GP do?

If you have a problem with gambling, your GP can give you tools, resources and support to help you cut back or quit. Your GP will want to talk to you about how often you gamble and how you feel about gambling. You'll be asked to talk about any symptoms or behaviours that might affect your gambling – for example, if you drink or take drugs.

Your GP will also:

- Talk to you about how you can keep track of your gambling
- Help you notice how your gambling affects you and your family
- Look for and treat any other health concerns related to your gambling, such as anxiety and depression
- Refer you to get further support. This referral could be to a gambling helpline or for counselling.
- Give you information to help you learn more about gambling

If you are being affected by someone else's gambling, your GP can also offer referrals and information on how you can get support. There are many support services available for those affected by gambling.

## What can I do?

Gambling affects people from all walks of life and in different ways. It is ok to need some form of help to stop gambling. Remember, your GP is here to help you, and there is plenty of support available. Talk to your GP about a referral for a counsellor.

Changing a habit takes time and effort, and you may need to try a few times before you are able to stop completely. It may help to:

- Think about any triggers that cause you to rely on gambling, like alcohol or drugs. Talk to your GP about how to manage these triggers and ask for tools to help you cope with your urges to gamble
- Stay positive. Many people are able to overcome gambling problems and return to a good quality of life
- Try to stay active and healthy
- Follow up on any referrals your GP may make
- Use the resources available for people wanting to change their gambling behaviour

If you are being affected by someone else's gambling, it is important that you seek support for yourself. Talk to your GP about what supports are available.

## The effects of gambling harm

Gambling harm can occur in the following ways:

*Financial losses and pressure*

*An increase in physical and mental health concerns*

*Harm to relationships*

*Difficulty in social interactions*

*Impacts on education and employment*

Gambling harm doesn't just affect the person who gambles, it can also affect those around them.

It is estimated that for every person who engages in harmful gambling, six people are affected.

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## What supports are available?

### Gambling HELP

NSW Government funded service offering free and confidential support 24 hours a day. Phone **1800 858 858**.

### South Western Sydney LHD Gambling Treatment Program

Free for people affected by problem gambling. District-wide service. Location: Mental Health Unit, Liverpool Hospital. Phone **9616 4354**.

### Warruwi Gambling Help

Problem gambling support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait people and communities. Phone **1800 752 948**.

### Mission Australia Problem Gambling Service

Free support for anyone living in the Macarthur region. Phone **4621 7400**.

### The Bridge Program

Free support and programs for problem gambling. Phone **9743 4535** or **13 72 58**.

### Moneycare Financial Counselling

Free services for those with problem gambling concerns. Visit [salvos.org.au](http://salvos.org.au)

### St John of God

Support for people affected by problem gambling. Fees apply. Phone **8746 4400** or visit [sjog.org.au](http://sjog.org.au)

### Uniting Gambling Counselling Service

Free online, phone and in-person support. Phone **4629 7070** or visit [uniting.org](http://uniting.org)

### USYD Gambling Treatment Clinic

Free support run by the University of Sydney School of Psychology. Phone **1800 482 482**.

### Headstart

Find other supports and services in the Headstart directory. Visit [headstart.org.au](http://headstart.org.au)

## What questions could I ask my doctor?

- How can I get help for my gambling problem?
- What should I do if my problem gets worse?
- What treatment options are available?
- Should I see a mental health professional?



## Where can I learn more?

- Arab Council of Australia: [arabcouncil.org.au](http://arabcouncil.org.au)
- Better Health Channel – gambling: [betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://betterhealth.vic.gov.au)
- Gamblers Anonymous: [gansw.org.au](http://gansw.org.au)
- Gambling Help Online – how to help: [gamblinghelponline.org.au](http://gamblinghelponline.org.au)
- Multicultural Problem Gambling Service of NSW: [dhi.health.nsw.gov.au/mpgs](http://dhi.health.nsw.gov.au/mpgs)
- NSW Government – gambling help: [gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au](http://gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au)

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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