
Gambling

Summary

- Responsible gambling means understanding the odds, knowing how much time or money to spend and when to stop.
 - If you gamble you should expect to lose. Gambling should be budgeted as an expense, just like going out for dinner, and not considered a way to make money.
 - If you suspect you may have a problem with gambling, understanding why you gamble can help you change your behaviour.
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Whether it's buying a lotto ticket, placing a bet on the horses or playing the pokies, most people gamble at some stage. But even if you only have a flutter from time to time, it's important to know how gambling works so you have realistic expectations about your chances of winning when you or someone you know gambles.

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Gamblers must expect to lose

Risk is the one thing that all types of gambling have in common. The thrill of 'taking a risk' is a big part of the entertainment. However, gambling odds are designed to work against you. For example, you are more likely to find buried treasure than win top prize at the pokies. If you gamble, you should expect to lose. Gambling should be budgeted as an expense, just like going out for dinner, and not considered a way to make money.

Different types of gambling

The two main types of gambling include:

- Chance-based – such as playing the lottery, roulette, bingo or gaming machines. The results are random. You can't influence whether you will win or lose. All players have an equal chance of winning.
- Skill-based gambling – such as betting on races and playing poker or blackjack. Your ability or skill can influence whether you win or lose. However, the odds of winning are not the same for all players and the odds are always in favour of the house. Skill doesn't mean a 'sure bet.' There can never be any certainty of the outcome.

The odds work against you

Knowing the odds is simply the best way to keep gambling in perspective. The odds vary depending on the game you choose to play. What doesn't vary is that the odds won't work with you in the long run. The table below shows some common forms of gambling for Victorians and the odds of winning. If you're ready to lose the money you spend on gambling, then you're ready for the odds.

Bet	Odds of winning	Typical prize
Poker machines – getting five black rhinos on black rhinos machine (top prize) (\$1 bet per line)	1 in 9,765,625	\$5000

Bet	Odds of winning	Typical prize
Tattslotto – winning first division (getting all six numbers correct)	1 in 8,145,060	\$300,000 - \$1m+
Powerball – winning first division (getting all five numbers and the powerball correct)	1 in 76,767,600	\$3m–\$15m
The Pools – winning first division (getting all six numbers correct)	1 in 2,760,681	\$500,000–\$700,000
Super 66 – winning first division (getting all six numbers correct)	1 in 1,000,000	\$60,000–\$90,000
Super 7's Oz Lotto – winning first division (getting all seven numbers correct)	1 in 45,379,620	\$1m–\$5m
Trackside – horse number 1 wins race (\$1 bet)	21 in 100	\$4
Trackside – horse number 12 wins race (\$1 bet)	2 in 100	\$35
Casino – roulette (single zero) – winning straight up (correct bet on a single number) (\$5 bet)	1 in 37	\$180
Casino – roulette (single zero) – winning black/red, high/low or odd/even (\$5 bet)	18 in 37	\$10
Casino – big wheel – getting the joker (pays 47-1) (\$5 bet)	1 in 52	\$240
Intralot Scratchies – '\$1 Sacks of Cash'	1 in 4.39	Top prize \$10,000
Intralot Scratchies – '\$20 Instant Million'	1 in 2.94	Top prize \$1,000,000

You are in control

People gamble for lots of different reasons and sometimes those reasons change. For example, you might gamble regularly at the TAB to win money, but join the Melbourne Cup sweep in your office to be sociable. You might usually play the pokies alone, but share a machine when you go out with family and friends. Gaming venues may want your business as a gambler, but you can exercise balance and control. Stick to some simple rules such as setting a money or time limit to help you walk away.

Problem gambling

For some people, gambling is a novelty; an occasional experience that is enjoyed for social entertainment. Gambling should always be seen as only one form of entertainment in a balanced lifestyle. However, gambling can change and grow without the person noticing how it has become more important. Increased gambling creates stresses in the person's life. If you suspect you may have a problem with gambling, understanding why you gamble can help you change your behaviour.

Help is available

betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Many organisations offer support, assistance and counselling for people who have problems with gambling. Depending on the service, the aim is to either control the gambling or abstain altogether. Some organisations also offer support to affected family and friends.

Gambler's Help

Gambler's Help is a free service for people who are affected by gambling. There are Gambler's Help services available throughout Victoria that provide:

- Free, professional, confidential counselling for people for whom gambling is an issue
- Counselling for the family and friends of people for whom gambling is an issue
- Financial counselling to help people with gambling-related money problems
- Advice on self-exclusion programs and other support services
- Community education to help communities reduce the negative effects of gambling.

Where to get help

- Your doctor or other health professional
- Gambler's Help Tel. 1800 858 858, TTY 1800 777 706 – 24-hour telephone counselling service
- Gamblers Anonymous Tel. (03) 9696 6108 – support group for people with a gambling problem
- Gamble Aware – information about the odds of winning, how gambling works, and when to stop
- Financial and Consumer Rights Council Tel. 1800 134 139 or (03) 9663 2000
- Lifeline Tel. 13 11 14
- SuicideLine Victoria Tel. 1300 651 251

Things to remember

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Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation

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