

# Youth gambling in New Zealand

## Wait, how can kids have gambling problems? They aren't old enough to gamble!

Legally, you do have to be 18 to use pokies, bet at a TAB, or buy an Instant Kiwi. And the casinos are supposed to keep out anyone under 20. But there's no minimum age for Lotto or Daily Keno.

It's estimated that a quarter of secondary school students — mostly boys — gamble each year. One

in 10 gamble on a monthly basis. And though most play scratchies and games with friends and family, some students have admitted to illegally playing pokies in pubs and casinos and making bets at the TAB.<sup>1</sup>

### *Adolescent problem gambling rates are up to double that of adults.*

A small but significant percentage of New Zealand students are having problems with gambling.<sup>2</sup> They are worried about the time they spend gambling, have tried to cut down or give it up, or gamble for escapism.

Youth living in areas of deprivation and youth that identify as Maori, Pasifika, or Asian experience the most harm from problem gambling in their families and communities.<sup>1</sup> As harm from gambling is a cyclical social problem, this means they are also at the greatest risk of developing their own gambling problems.<sup>1,3</sup>

## Unhealthy youth gambling

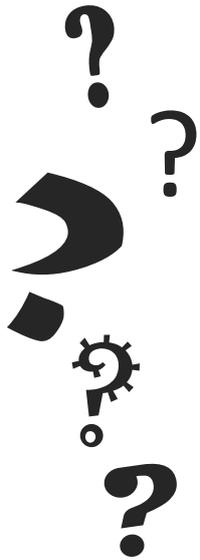
### Signs of risk

- Problem gambling in the family, which can lead to fights, unpaid bills, and going without needed items
- Worrying about time and money spent gambling
- Gambling with people they do not know
- Gambling online or on smartphones
- Drinking and smoking
- Mental health issues, ie depression and suicide attempts
- Excessive internet usage and computer gaming

### How to stay protected

- Good overall wellbeing
- Being socially connected to friends and family

## Do you have a gambling problem? Ask yourself:



**Do you gamble with your friends?  
Or with strangers?**

Do you skip school or work to gamble?

Do you think you can win back your losses?

**Do you borrow money so you can gamble?**

*Do you hide your gambling from your family?*

Do you fight with your family about how  
much you're gambling?

Do either of your parents gamble a lot?

***Have you thought about committing a crime to  
finance gambling?***

**If you answer yes to any of these questions, then PGF can help you.**

**Free, professional and confidential help is only a phone call or email away.**

Call **0800 664 262** or email **help@pgfnz.org**

### Sources:

- 1 Rossen, F. V., Fleming, T., Lucassen, M., Denny, S., Peiris-John, R., Teevale, T., ... The Adolescent Health Research Group. (2013). *The health and wellbeing of New Zealand secondary school students in 2012: Youth gambling*. Auckland, New Zealand: The University of Auckland.
- 2 Rossen et. al. discuss multiple studies from around the world that show youth problem gambling rates between 1.5 and four times the adult rate. Rossen's own research in this area puts the NZ youth problem gambling rate at 3.8%, double the adult rate of up to 2%.
- 3 Dowling, N., Jackson, A., Thomas, S., & Frydenberg, E. (2010). *Children at risk of developing problem gambling*. Melbourne: The Problem Gambling Research and Treatment Centre.

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